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SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF NOTED PERSONS

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

OF

NOTED PERSONS

"For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?"

GRAY

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Compiled in Leisure Hours

BY

JUSTIN S. MORRILL

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1887

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PREFACE.

A SECOND edition of this monograph has been suggested by the fact that in the distribution of the first or private edition some valued personal friends were neglected, and a demand for copies, impossible for the printer to supply, was also made by many who had no desire to be served gratuitously. It has also been asserted, by those competent to know, that the field which has afforded the author occasional recreation and some relief from more serious labor, has heretofore found no gleaner. The literary plants exhibited are rather tropical, and unlikely to be sought by anybody for propagation; but they may have some interest for those who are curious to observe how widely such growths have flourished even under adverse conditions. Occasional leisure moments have served, even without extraordinary research, to bring forth considerable additions, both of names and material, further demonstrating the "Self-consciousness of Noted Persons."

The bundle of traits somewhat marking human nature, here gathered together, was originally privately printed and distributed, possibly for the reason that when we have found a story pointedly illustrating any historic or notable character, it often seems worth relating; and we are loath to bury forever even a twice-told tale, but rather venture to give it out where it may offer, to our friends at least, that transient amusement we have already tasted.

It may be true that in the exposures here occasionally made of the illustrious dead, something of the reproach will have been incurred which Hamlet cast upon the jolly grave-digger: "Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making!"

It will be seen, however, that no graves have been made, nor aught set down in malice; but may we not smile when only self-made records are upturned and merely brought to light? The most fastidious among the greatest names here recorded, if they could speak, would blush, and admit that they have only been placed in a "goodlie companie" of some of the world's noted celebrities.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Adams, John	23
Adams, John Quincy	29
Alexander the Great	20
Allen, Ethan	26
Ames, Fisher	27
Anacreon	8
Angelo, Michael	69
Augustus, Caius Octavius Cæsar	19
Bacon, Francis	83
Barnum, Phineas T.	40
Beaufort, Cardinal	79
Beethoven	74
Benton, Thomas Hart	32
Bismarck, Prince	78
Boileau, Nicholas	49
Boswell, James	141
Brathwayte, Richard	96
Brougham, Henry (Lord)	145
Brown, David Paul	35
Browne, Sir Thomas	149
Bryant, William C.	34
Bulwer-Lytton, Edward	171
Burke, Edmund	114
Burns, Robert	128
Burton, Robert	89
Butler, Frances Ann Kemble	175
Byron, Lord (George Gordon Noel)	158
Campbell, Thomas	143
Campbell, Lord John	155
Carlyle, Thomas	161
Cavour, Count	71
Chambord, Comte de	64
Châteaubriand	53
Chatham, Lord	103
Chatterton, Thomas	127
Choate, Rufus	36
Churchill, John (Duke of Marlborough)	98
Cicero	8
Cobbett, William	131
Coke, Sir Edward	81
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor	138
Corbiac, Pierre de	60
Corday, Charlotte	56
Cowper, William	117
Croker, John Wilson	154
Czar of Russia	20
Dante Alighieri	66
Danton, George Jacques	52
Davy, Sir Humphry	151
Demosthenes	3
De Quincey, Thomas	158
Dickens, Charles	177
Disraeli (Earl of Beaconsfield)	172
Dryden, John	94
Dumas, Alexandre	62
Elizabeth, Queen	81
Emerson, Ralph Waldo	37
Emmet, Robert	151
Erskine, Thomas	124
Fielding, Henry	103
Francis, Sir Philip (Junius)	123

	Page
Franklin, Benjamin	22
Froissart, Jean	46
Fuller, Margaret	40
Garfield, James A.	46
George IV.	131
Gibbon, Edward	118
Godwin, William	129
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von	73
Goldsmith, Oliver	111
Guizot, François Pierre Guillaume	64
Hawthorne, Nathaniel	38
Hazlitt, William	150
Heine, Heinrich	78
Herrick, Robert	90
Hogarth, William	101
Hogg, James	136
Horace	12
Houghton, Lord	173
Hugo, Marie Victor	61
Hume, David	108
Hunt, James Henry Leigh	157
Hunter, Dr. John	114
Jefferson, Thomas	24
Jerrold, Douglas	170
Johnson, Dr. Samuel	104
Jonson, Ben	87
Junius (Sir Philip Francis)	123
Keats, John	163
Kepler, Johann	72
Kneller, Sir Godfrey	96
Lamb, Charles	140
Lamartine, Alphonse de	60
Lely, Sir Peter	93
Lévis, Duc de	51
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth	39
Lovejoy, Rev. Owen	41
Lowell, James Russell	44
Luther, Martin	71
Macaulay, Thomas Babington	164
Macbeth, John W. Vilant	181
Macready, William Charles	161
Martialis, Marcus Valerius	15
Martineau, Harriet	170
Mérimée, Prosper	63
Metternich, Prince	74
Milton, John	91
Mirabeau, Gabriel Honoré	62
Montaigne, Michel	47
Montrose, Marquis of	48
Moore, Thomas	152
Napoleon Bonaparte	56
Napoleon, Louis	63
Nelson, Lord	130
Ney, Marshal	60
Ovid	14
Parr, Dr. Samuel	182
Paul the Apostle	1
Paul I.	21
Petrarch	69
Phædrus	7
Pinkney, William	28
Piron, Alexis	49
Pitt, William	131
Pliny the Younger	18
Pope, Alexander	100
Porson, Richard	128
Quincey, Thomas De	158
Quincy, Josiah	30
Quintilian	13
Reynolds, Sir Joshua	110
Richelieu	48
Rogers, Samuel	134
Rousseau, Jean Jacques	51
Ruskin, John	179
Sallust	12
Savage, Richard	102
Saxe, John G.	42
Scott, Sir Walter	182
Shaftesbury, Lord	93
Shakspeare, William	85
Shaw, Henry W. (Josh Billings)	44
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley	127
Smith, Sydney	182

	Page
Somerset, Duke of	80
Southey, Robert	139
Sterne, Laurence	109
Stevens, Thaddeus	34
Swift, Jonathan	98
Tacitus, Caius Cornelius	16
Taylor, Sir Henry	167
Themistocles	6
Thiers, Louis-Adolphe	62
Thoreau, Henry David	42
Thucydides	7
Tocqueville, Alexis de	63
Trollope, Anthony	178
Tupper, Martin Farquhar	174
Voltaire	50
Watts, Isaac	99
Webster, Daniel	31
Wellington, Duke of	134
Wesley, Rev. John	102
White, Richard Grant	45
Whitman, Walt.	43
Wieland, Christopher Martin	72
Wilkes, John	122
Wolsey, Cardinal	80
Wordsworth, William	135
Xenophon	7
Young, Edward	100

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INTRODUCTION.

AMONG mankind there are none so high and none so low as to be utterly insensible to fame, or to the approbation of their fellow-men. Indeed, all men rather covet both; not always as their due for brain-work, but as a just reward for some personal merit. The passion with some becomes conspicuous, possibly offensive; while with others it is so veiled with modesty or with art as to remain a secret even to nearest friends. Most men desire no more than fair credit for the specialty wherein they have practically excelled, well knowing that groundless praise has no adhering quality except as well-grounded satire. Few men ever excel all the world in more than one faculty.[1] A would-be universal genius, like a boy on stilts, is soon humbled in the dust.

Archimedes relied for credit upon his knowledge of mechanical forces, and not upon any skill as a meta-

[1] Michael Angelo was, however, pre-eminent in three kindred arts: architecture, sculpture, and painting.

physician. Cicero had to be content with eloquence and knowledge of philosophy, rather than with the martial glory of the soldier. John Jacob Astor, if he had little taste and genius for poetry, found delight in the scramble of business; nor could he have expected much renown as a man of science, but he could not have been ignorant of his mercantile distinction as a man of enterprise.

The almost universal passion of the human race to do something worthy of remembrance is not only serviceable, but laudable; and yet the world forbids, even to the most exalted merit, the privilege of self-applause, or of blowing one's own trumpet. The Romans tired of hearing Cicero refer to himself as their savior from Catiline's conspiracy; and it is doubtful whether Washington, while living, could have accepted the title, now so freely granted, of "first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Wit, benevolence, and good nature associate together harmoniously; but the moment that pride and vanity obtrude, discord is to be apprehended, and possibly a declaration of war by all observers capable of either sneers or kicks. The world, like the Irish bruiser, stands ready for a fight with the first man who claims to be better than anybody else.

And yet the physician or surgeon destitute of self-confidence in the ready application of his professional

skill would soon find himself without patients. The judge not known to be conscious of his ability to administer the law with ample knowledge and rectitude could not long retain the favor or respect of the public. A man may be rich without being ignorant of the fact; but the world will not tolerate his proclaiming even the real truth from the house-tops, except possibly when the tax-gatherer is around after an income-tax, and then all agree that he may be as ostentatious as he pleases. The grand list, returned by each individual, may be warranted to be free of vanity. The builder of a ship knows in advance what will be her tonnage, what the rate of speed, and what the cost; and, in this case, it is only when this knowledge fails that the builder is charged with insupportable vanity. It is the same with the surgeon who fails to repair a broken hip-joint: he becomes liable, and may be punished for his conceited malpractice.

There are few nations which do not indulge some pride above their contemporaries as to their numbers, extent of empire, products, men of renown in war, letters, or science; but there is no one to which all others yield unquestioned pre-eminence. If France is elated with her wine, Italy shines in silk, and Russia grows strong with hemp. If England is rich in boundless metals, she is not without a rival in the United States, greater also in corn and potatoes, cotton and tobacco. Persia may have thought much of

her astrology, but Poland thought more of falconry. If France exalts Napoleon, Great Britain does not forget Wellington. When Germany points to Frederick the Great, the United States cannot hold back Washington and Grant. Every land complacently furnishes its hero. If England confidently trusts to the immortality of Shakspeare and Milton, every philhellenist points to Homer, as Italy points to Dante, Germany to Goethe, Spain to Cervantes, and France to Molière and Corneille. England believes the eloquence of Chatham, Burke, and Fox was unrivalled; but France has no idea that Mirabeau or Massillon was ever eclipsed, and the United States stoutly affirms that Webster made speeches beyond the reach of them all, Demosthenes included. All nations unite in the Scotchman's humble prayer, "Lord, gie us a guid conceit o' oursels," but all should agree with the ancients that "it is not becoming to sacrifice to our heroes till after sunset."

Among the earth-born millions, in each age some single mortal may perhaps be raised to the skies, while a goodly number, ambitious and confident of an eternity of fame, enjoy undisputed ascendency — "give their little senate laws" — for a brief time and within local boundaries, but are not inquired after in the next generation or outside of their own neighborhood, and their names are no longer recognized by the oldest inhabitant. Truly all may say with Shakspeare: —

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

Few, however, envy honors paid after death; and it must be admitted that it is difficult to laugh at honest vanity, or at those who claim no more than is honestly their due, of which we have frequent examples; but it is a pity that so many should place on record claims against posterity which fail to be honored. Not infrequently their works are as little sought after as almanacs out of date. As Cowper says: —

"In vain recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age;
Those twinkling, tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand.'

It is curious that the poet Young in his "Love of Fame the Universal Passion," and Pope in his "Essay on Man," reiterate the same idea, and neither fails to remember Cæsar.

Young says: —

"Some sink outright;
O'er them, and o'er their names, the billows close;
To-morrow knows not they were ever born.
Others a short memorial leave behind,
Like a flag floating when the bark 's engulfed;
It floats a moment, and is seen no more;
One Cæsar lives, a thousand are forgot."

And Pope also asks, "What 's fame?" addressing Lord Bolingbroke: —

"A fancied life in others' breath,
A thing beyond us, even before our death,
Just what you hear you have, — and what 's unknown,
The same, my lord, if Tully's or your own.
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes and friends;
To all beside, as much an empty shade,
An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead,
Alike, or when, or where they shone, or shine,
Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine."

That most brilliant of modern writers, Adolphe Taine, the French critic, in his work on "English Literature," brings forth the same idea in the following sparkling paragraph: "But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the Temple of Diana, he is almost lost that built it. Time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. . . . All is vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise. Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams. . . . The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, only to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the Flood, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century."

I have taken some leaves from my scrap-book, with extracts from various authors, showing both well-founded and ill-founded ambition to be held in remembrance by posterity, but mostly well-founded examples, and only a few of persons who have mistakenly felt that their names must make

> "The face of heaven so bright,
> That birds shall sing, and think it were not night."

Others, doubtless, have been more diligent readers than myself, and therefore might furnish other and more striking examples of self-admiration, or of "wits who get the first taste of their own jokes;" but I shall present only brief illustrations of a few of the names which have from time to time attracted, as literary curiosities, my attention. Let me add, in the words of old Montaigne: "I have here only made a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them."

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

OF

NOTED PERSONS.

B. A.D. 12. **PAUL THE APOSTLE.** D. A.D. 67.

AMONG the great men of a great period, no one is entitled to higher rank in the time of Christ's apostles than Paul, or Saul of Tarsus. He boldly told his brethren what he was, what he had suffered, and what he had done; little thinking, perhaps, that he was yet to suffer death at the hands of Nero, perhaps the worst of Roman tyrants. The pre-eminence of Paul as the most eloquent preacher of the gospel and as the most learned and fertile expounder of the great doctrines of Christianity was no doubt as apparent to Christians eighteen hundred years ago as it is to-day, and was admitted by Peter, though he had been once rebuked by Paul face to face. Paul could therefore truthfully say that he had "labored more abundantly than they all," notwithstanding his person was small and deformed, or, as he said himself, "nothing."

To the Corinthians he frankly stated: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

When Paul went to Jerusalem the second time to meet other apostles, he was evidently disappointed; they did not come up to his expectations; and he says (Gal. ii. 6): "But of those who seemed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person), — for they who seemed *to be somewhat*, in conference added nothing to me: but contrariwise."

We discover who the parties were "who seemed to be somewhat," in the 9th verse, where Paul, slightly conciliated by their "right hand of fellowship," says: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship."

Paul's conscious superiority to his associates, with some honest vanity no doubt, frequently appears; and yet, so far as we can judge from his immortal works, he did not comparatively overestimate himself. Christianity without the Great Apostle of the Gentiles would have been deprived of its most eloquent advocate, and its acceptance by mankind possibly indefinitely postponed.

B. B.C. 385. **DEMOSTHENES.** D. B.C. 322.

DEMOSTHENES, having to confront those who assailed his measures as well as himself, was compelled, even in his Philippics, to defend and sometimes to laud himself, and thus to serve his country by showing that he was truly patriotic in his immortal efforts to unite all Greece in resistance to Philip; but there was nothing of egotism in these superb invectives which he could afford to blot, or that the world would consent to have expunged. He was not moved by vanity, but by truth.

When Æschines indirectly attempted to prevent the Golden Crown from being conferred on Demosthenes, in accordance with a decree of the Senate, by a masterly but very malignant speech on his proposed impeachment of Ctesiphon, the author of the decree, it became necessary for Demosthenes to defend his whole life, public and private; and his ability and marvellous eloquence nowhere appear to better advantage than in his long "Oration on the Crown," in reply to Æschines. On such an occasion his self-defence depended upon a refutation of the slanderous personal attacks; and his frequent facts touching himself were stated with the utmost good taste, but with such force as to overwhelm the charges and to cause the exile of their author.

As specimens of self-conscious worth on the part of Demosthenes, a few examples will be taken from this celebrated oration.

"Look through my whole conduct, and you shall find nothing there that brought down this calamity upon my country. Let it be considered that there is no one instance in which the ambassadors of Macedon ever prevailed against me in any of those States where I appeared as the Ambassador of Athens: not in Thessaly, nor in Ambracia, nor in Illyria, nor among the Thracian princes, nor in Byzantium, — in no one place; no, nor in the last debate at Thebes. But whatever was thus acquired by my superiority over the Ambassadors of Philip, their master soon recovered by force of arms. And this is urged as my offence."

Again he says: "Know then, Æschines, it was my fortune, when a youth, to be trained up in a liberal course of education, supplied in such manner as to place me above the base temptations of poverty; when a man, to act suitably to such an education, to contribute, in my full proportion, to all the exigencies of the State; never to be wanting in any honorable conduct, either in private or public life; but on all occasions to approve myself useful to my country and to my friends. When I came into the administration of public affairs, I determined upon such a course of conduct as frequently gained me the honor of a crown both from this and other States of Greece. . . . Such hath been the fortune of my life: a subject on which I might enlarge; but I must restrain myself, lest I should give offence by an affectation of importance."

And again he says: "Take the whole course of your life, Æschines, and of mine; compare them without heat or acrimony. You attended on your scholars: I was myself a scholar. You served in initiations: I was initiated. You were a performer in our public entertainments: I was the director. You took notes of speeches: I was a speaker. You were an underplayer: I was a spectator. You failed in your part: I hissed you. Your public conduct was devoted to our enemies: mine to my country."

Of course, to understand the pertinence of the words of Demosthenes it is necessary to be familiar with the argument of Æschines, who was in ability no very inferior antagonist, and who, after this crushing defeat, set up a school of oratory in his exile at Rhodes.

One extract more. Says Demosthenes: "Was I ever known, like you and your associates, to lean to that side where a bribe had been, as it were, cast into the scale? No; my whole conduct was influenced by a spirit of rectitude, a spirit of justice and integrity; and, engaged as I was, in affairs of greater moment than any statesman of my time, I administered them all with a most exact and uncorrupted faith. These are the merits on which I claim this honor."

B. 514 B.C. **THEMISTOCLES.** D. 449 B.C.

When Themistocles, being awkward in his manners, was derided in company, where free scope was given to raillery by persons who passed as more accomplished in what was called genteel breeding, Plutarch informs us that he replied with proud asperity, "'T is true I never learned how to tune a harp or play upon a lute; but I know how to raise a small and inconsiderable city to glory and greatness."

In early life he earned the reproach of following his own disposition without any moral restraints, and apologized for this afterwards when he observed that "the wildest colts make the best horses, when they come to be broken and properly managed."

After the battle of Marathon, and when the generalship of Miltiades was everywhere extolled, the love of glory caused Themistocles to change his habits, to keep much alone, and to shun the usual entertainments. When asked by his friends the reason of this change, he said, "The trophies of Miltiades would not suffer him to sleep."

Cicero said of Pompey that "he was a lover of himself without a rival."

It was of Lord Burleigh the remark was made that "no man could be as wise as he looked."

"Some help themselves," writes Bacon, "with countenance and gesture, and are wise by signs; as Cicero saith of Piso, that, when he answered him,

he fetched one of his brows up to his forehead, and bent the other down to his chin."

Nero had the same vanity in driving a chariot that Trajan had in governing an empire with justice and ability.

B. B.C. 471. **THUCYDIDES.** D. B.C. 400.

THUCYDIDES applied the following remark to his own great work:—

"It is composed so as to be regarded as a possession forever, rather than as a prize declamation intended only for the present."

B. B.C. 443. **XENOPHON.** D. B.C. 355.

XENOPHON, the adopted citizen of Athens, and the best historian of Alexander, in one of his books suddenly interrupts the thread of his narrative to tell his readers that he himself is as "eminent among the Greeks for eloquence as Alexander was for arms."

B. A.D. 8. **PHÆDRUS.**

[Lived in the reign of Tiberius. He was brought to Rome as a slave and emancipated by Augustus. He is known as the author of Latin Fables.]

PHÆDRUS says to his patron Eutychus, "If you design to read my works, I shall be pleased; if not, I shall at least have the advantage of pleasing posterity."

B. about B.C. 550. **ANACREON.**

WHEN Anacreon, towards the close of his life, was shown by his friends some vines and grapes with which his urn was to be festooned, he begged them to convert the grapes into wine, that he might enjoy them while living.

A statue of Anacreon was raised to him on the Acropolis at Athens which represented him in a state of vinous hilarity. Tom Moore, a poet of congenial spirit, very successfully translated his Odes. The light and flowing verses celebrated only wine and beauty. A single example will show the character of the whole:

"Away, away, ye men of rules,
What have I to do with schools?
They 'd make me learn, they 'd make me think,
But would they make me love and drink?
Teach me this, and let me swim
My soul upon the goblet's brim;
Teach me this, and let me twine
Some fond responsive heart to mine."

B. B.C. 106. **CICERO.** D. (assassinated) B.C. 43.

ONE of the boldest examples of Cicero's great confidence in himself is to be found in one of his orations, where, referring to his great Roman rival (Antony), he exclaims: "Would he wish to engage with me in a contest of eloquence? He would then confer an obligation on me; for what ampler field,

what more copious subject could I desire, than opportunity of speaking on behalf of myself and against Antony?"

The conspicuous vanity of Cicero is well known, especially in his Dialogues, where he makes his friend Atticus and others decorate him with constant praise. In his remarks on "eminent orators," of whom it is not too much to say he was himself the most eminent, after referring to the gradual decay of the eloquence of Hortensius, he makes, as usual, the personal pronoun prominent, and says: "I, at the same time, spared no pains to improve and enlarge my talents, such as they were, by every exercise that was proper for the purpose, but particularly that of writing. Not to mention several other advantages I derived from it, I shall only observe that about this time, and but a very few years after my ædileship, I was declared the first prætor by the unanimous suffrages of my fellow-citizens. For, by my diligence and assiduity as a pleader, and my accurate way of speaking, which was rather superior to the ordinary style of the bar, the novelty of my eloquence had engaged the attention and secured the good wishes of the public." After all this he adds, "But I will say nothing of myself."

When Lucceius announced his purpose of writing a history which should include the Catilinian Conspiracy, we find that Cicero did not scruple to beg him to enlarge a little on the truth. "You must grant something to our friendship," said he; "let

me pray you to delineate my exploits in a way that shall reflect the greatest possible glory on myself."

Cicero, in his Commonwealth, is loud in praising himself for services in saving the Republic from the conspiracy of Catiline. He never forgets it, and says:

"Since, on my quitting the Consulship, I affirmed in the assembly of the Roman people, who re-echoed my words, that I had saved the Commonwealth, I console myself with this remembrance for all my cares, troubles, and injuries. Indeed, my dismission had more of honor than misfortune, and more of glory than disaster; and I derive greater pleasure from the regrets of good men than sorrow from the exultation of the reprobate. But if it had happened otherwise, why should I complain? Nothing befell me unforeseen, or more painful than I expected, as a return for my illustrious actions. I was one who, on occasion, could derive more profit from leisure than most men, on account of the diversified sweetness of my studies, in which I have lived from boyhood."

After Pompey had overthrown Mithridates, and was coming back with the fame of successes in Asia, Cicero feared that the lustre of his own name might be eclipsed. "I used to be in alarm," he confesses, "that six hundred years hence the merits of Sampsiceramus[1] might seem to have been more than mine."

Montaigne did not admire Cicero, and says: —

"As to Cicero, I am of the common opinion that (learning excepted) he had no great natural parts.

[1] The nickname which Cicero often gave to Pompey.

He was a good citizen, of an affable nature, as all fat, heavy men, such as he was, usually are, but given to ease, and had a weighty share of vanity and ambition. Neither do I know how to excuse him for thinking his poetry fit to be published. 'T is no great imperfection to make ill verses; but it is an imperfection not to be able to judge how unworthy his verses were of the glory of his name For what concerns his eloquence, that is totally out of comparison. I believe it will never be equalled."

Cicero, though master of much legal knowledge, evidently rated it much lower than eloquence. He was an advocate, or an orator, before he was a *juris consult*, which in Rome was then equivalent to what is understood by the term of special pleader or attorney in England at the present time. The special learning of these, in his defence of Murena, he affects to scorn, and says, "If you put me upon my mettle, overwhelmed with business as I am, I will in three days declare myself a *juris consult*." David Paul Brown, the Philadelphia orator, seems to have adopted in his work of "The Forum" this sneer of Cicero, and declares, "The advocate, compared to a mere lawyer, is Hyperion to a Satyr."

Cicero, when asked about his lineage, responded, "I commenced an ancestry."

"There was never yet," he once said, "a true poet or orator that thought any other better than himself."

B. B.C. 87. **SALLUST.** D. B.C. 35.

"IT becomes all men, who desire to excel other animals, to strive to the utmost of their power not to pass through life in obscurity, like the beasts of the field, which Nature has found grovelling and subservient to appetite.

"All our power is situate in the mind and in the body. Of the mind we rather employ the government; of the body the service. The one is common to us with the gods; the other with the brutes. It appears to me, therefore, more reasonable to pursue glory by means of the intellect than of bodily strength; and, since the life which we enjoy is short, to make the remembrance of us as lasting as possible. For the glory of wealth and beauty is fleeting and perishable; that of intellectual power is illustrious and immortal."

B. B.C. 65. **HORACE.** D. B.C. 8.

HORACE pays a very indifferent compliment to a contemporary in the ode addressed to him, in order to claim a higher one for himself. "No one," he says, "is happy in every respect. And I may perhaps enjoy some advantages which you are deprived of. You possess great riches: your bellowing herds cover the Sicilian plains; your chariot is drawn by the finest horses; and you are arrayed in the richest

purple. But the indulgent Fates, with a small inheritance have given me a fine genius, and have endowed me with a contempt for the malignant judgments of the vulgar."

Horace claimed that his songs would "last as long as the priestess ascended the steps" of the Roman Capitol, — and they have lasted much longer.

That Horace rather grandly placed a very high estimate upon himself and his works, appears from the following extract: —

> "I have built a monument, —
> A monument more lasting than bronze, . . .
> Soaring more high than regal pyramids,
> Which neither the gnawing raindrop
> Nor the vain rush of the Boreas shall destroy.
> Nor shall it pass away with the unnumbered
> Series of ages and the flight of time.
> I shall not wholly die."

B. A.D. 40. **QUINTILIAN.** D. A.D. 118.

QUINTILIAN declares that self-applause is more tolerable than "the hypocritical boastfulness of those who speak of themselves as poor when they abound with wealth, as obscure when they are of high rank, as weak when they have great influence, as ignorant and incapable of speaking when they are possessed of great eloquence. It is an ostentatious kind of vanity to speak thus ironically of ourselves. Let us be content to be praised by others, for it becomes us,

as Demosthenes says, to blush even when we hear other men's commendations of ourselves."

Quintilian also observes that he wishes Cicero "had been more modest, since the malicious have never ceased to remark upon his

> 'To gowns let arms succumb, and laurel crowns
> To eloquence;'[1]

and

> 'O happy Rome, that found new life when I
> Was consul.'"[2]

B. B.C. 43. **OVID.** D. A.D. 18.

A TRANSLATION from the poet Ovid reads: —

> "And when I am dead and gone,
> My corpse laid under a stone,
> My fame shall yet survive,
> And I shall be alive;
> In these my works, forever,
> My glory shall persever."

A Latin poet is quoted by Bacon as saying, "The people hiss me, but I applaud myself;" but we must refer to old Montaigne or to Rousseau, to find a parallel to the way in which Ovid would appear to have confessed and gloried in his own shame. The impudence of the following line has been rarely equalled: "Ille ego nequitiæ Naso poeta meæ." This has been rendered thus: "I, the great Naso, the poet of my own naughtiness."

[1] "Cedant arma togæ, concedat laurea linguæ."
[2] "O fortunatam natam me consule Romam."

His Latin name was Publius Ovidius Naso. The "great Naso" was the great nose, and his love-poems were often personal confessions. His practices were on a level with his precepts. He put away two wives, and lived long with a nobleman's wife as his mistress.

MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS.

B. A.D. 43. D. A.D. 104.

MARTIAL as an author of epigrams remains without a peer either in ancient or modern times; but, as he said himself of the epigrams, "Some are good, some middling, many bad: a book, Avitas, cannot be made in any other way."

"To the Reader," he offers the following: —

"The man whom you are reading is the very man that you want, — Martial, known over the whole world for his humorous books of epigrams; to whom, studious reader, you have accorded such honors while he is alive and has a sense of them, as few poets receive after their death."

Stertinius, it appears, had placed the bust of Martial in his library, and thereupon Martial sent an inscription to live beneath his bust, which he says had been "placed among those of no obscure persons," — "I am he, second to none in reputation for composing trifles, whom, reader, you do not admire, but rather, I suspect, love. Let greater men devote their powers to higher subjects. I am content to talk of small topics and to come frequently into your hands."

It is to the discredit of Martial that he flattered Domitian, the last of the twelve Cæsars, and obtained many favors of him. To the father of three or more children, it seems, great privileges were allowed among the Romans; he sat in the best seats at games, and could stand for public offices. He, therefore, asked of Cæsar, "to permit that to seem to be which fortune forbids in reality; namely, that I may be regarded as the father of three children. This boon, if I have failed to please thee, will be some consolation to me; if I have succeeded in pleasing thee, will be some reward."

The boon was granted; but when Domitian was assassinated, instead of the pattern of every virtue, Martial represented the Emperor after death as

> "The monster of the times,
> Without one virtue to redeem his crimes."

CAIUS CORNELIUS TACITUS.

B. A.D. 50 or 55. D. about A.D. 126.

If there are any evidences of egotism in the History and other writings of Tacitus, I have not happened to notice them, and he seems even to be fearful that he may overstep the bounds of modesty in some necessary references to himself.

His Life of Agricola remains the highest standard of biography, and the praise he bestows on Agricola, his father-in-law, is surpassingly fine. Of him he writes:

"To say of a character truly great, that integrity and a spirit above corruption made a part of it, were mere tautology, as injurious to his virtues as it is unnecessary. Even the love of fame, that fine incentive of generous minds, could neither betray him into an ostentatious display of virtue, nor induce him to practise those specious acts that court applause and often supply the place of merit."

Then he says: "During his consulship, though I was very young, he agreed to a marriage between me and his daughter, who certainly might have looked for a prouder connection. The nuptial ceremony was not performed till the term of his consulship expired."

This is modestly enough expressed; but Tacitus, later in life, would not have thought that even the daughter of Agricola needed to look for a "prouder connection."

In his Annals, relating that "after an interval of sixty-four years" since the secular games were last celebrated, he mentions that the chief magistrates officiated in the ceremonies, and that the Trojan game was performed by the youth of noble birth, where it seems to have been an office of great dignity to "regulate the ceremonies." He says: —

"The chronology observed by Augustus differed from the system of Claudius; but this is not the place for the discussion of that point. I have been sufficiently explicit on the subject in the history of Domitian, who likewise gave an exhibition of secular games. Being at that time one of the college of

fifteen, it fell to my province to regulate the ceremonies. Let it not be imagined that this is said from motives of vanity."

And, dear Tacitus! we will not so imagine.

B. A.D. 61. PLINY THE YOUNGER. D. A.D. 116.

In the days of Pliny, eighteen hundred years ago, books were multiplied by copyists only; and yet, when it was known that Tacitus was at work upon his History, it excited a wide and lively interest. Pliny says in a letter: "If my uncle is mentioned in your immortal work, his name will live forever in the records of fame." In another letter he shows some anxiety himself to "live forever," and says: "I presage that your history will be immortal. I ingenuously own, therefore, that I wish to find a place in it. If we are generally careful to have our faces taken by the best artist, ought we not to desire that our actions may be celebrated by an author of your distinguished character?" He then adds: "Whatever my merit may be in this business [the prosecution of Bebius Massa], it is in your power to heighten and spread the lustre of it; though I am far from desiring you should in the least exceed the bounds of reality."

Still, it is clear he would have him "heighten and spread the lustre of it."

From Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" I copy the following: —

"Pliny doth ingenuously confess to his dear friend Angurinus, 'all thy writings are most acceptable, but those especially that speak of us.' Again, a little after to Maximus, 'I cannot express how pleasing it is to me to have myself commended.'"

Nearly all of our candidates for the Presidency become the slaves of fame and popular opinion. Each of them could say with Trebellius Pollio, "'T is all my desire night and day, 't is all my study, to raise my name."

Even proud Pliny was not ashamed to say in an epistle to a friend, "I burn with incredible desire to have my name registered in thy book."

Pliny early received favors from Domitian the tyrant, and thus explains himself: —

"If I appeared, in the reign of a disguised, a politic, and insidious prince, to go forward in the career of honors, it was at a time when the tyrant had not unmasked himself. As soon as he showed himself the avowed enemy of every virtue, I gave a check to ambition; and though I saw the shortest way to the highest dignities, the longest appeared to me the best."

AUGUSTUS, CAIUS OCTAVIUS CÆSAR.

B. B.C. 63. D. A.D. 14.

Augustus was the second Emperor of Rome, and hardly claimed too much when he said, "I found Rome brick, I leave it marble."

B. B.C. 356. **ALEXANDER THE GREAT.** D. B.C. 323.

"Go," said Alexander the Great to his soldiers, when they refused to follow him to the Indus, — "go tell your countrymen that you left Alexander completing the conquest of the world."

After the battle on the Granicus, Alexander had very great offers made to him by Darius. Consulting with his captains concerning them, Parmenio said, "Sure I would accept of these offers, if I were as Alexander." To which Alexander answered, "So would I, if I were as Parmenio."

He was wont to say that he knew he was mortal by two things, — sleep and lust.

When his father wished Alexander to run for the prize of the race at the Olympian games (for he was very swift), he said, "He would, if he might run with kings."

Hearing when a boy of the military achievements of Philip, he said, "My father will leave me nothing to do."

THE CZAR OF RUSSIA.

THE Czar of Russia once made war upon Sweden because he was not treated with sufficient honors when he passed through the country in disguise.

PAUL I. D. 1801.

The Mad Czar, commonly spoken of as Paul I., son of Catherine the Great, was possibly the greatest and most brutal tyrant of all the rulers of Russia, though he was murdered in 1801, after a reign of less than five years. His education was studiously neglected, and his mother caused him to be treated with constant insult; and yet, though himself the ugliest man in his empire, having married for his second wife a woman "divinely tall and most divinely fair," there were born to the imperial pair four sons and six daughters, — all save one son distinguished for their stateliness and personal beauty, seeming to have been children solely of their mother. It has been widely conceded that from this union resulted the handsomest ruling race in Europe.

Paul's reply to General Dumouriez offers a specimen of his immense conceit. The General having absented himself from the court one day, Paul asked him if he had been unwell. "No, Sire; but one of the most important persons of your court having asked me to dinner, I could not refuse him." "Sir," replied the Czar, "I would have you know that there is no person of importance here except me and the person I am speaking to; and he only so long as I am speaking to him."

Paul I., like his father, was murdered by his own family.

B. 1706. **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.** D. 1790.

In his "Autobiography," Franklin says: "And lastly (I may as well confess it, since my denial of it will be believed by nobody), perhaps I shall a good deal gratify my own vanity. Indeed, I scarce ever heard or saw the introductory words, 'Without vanity I may say,' etc., but some vain thing immediately followed. Most people dislike vanity in others, whatever share they may have of it themselves; but I give it fair quarter wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor, and to others that are within his sphere of action; and therefore in many cases it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity, among the other comforts of life."

In one of his letters he writes: "What you mention concerning the love of praise is indeed very true: it reigns more or less in every heart; though we are generally hypocrites in that respect, and pretend to disregard praise, and our nice, modest ears are offended, forsooth! with what one of the ancients calls *the sweetest kind of music.* I wish the out-of-fashion practice of praising ourselves would, like other old fashions, come round into fashion again. But this, *I* fear, will not be in our time."

When, on June 15, 1775, Franklin sent up his kite and received the electric shock, heaving a deep sigh, he felt, as he has himself said, "a deep consciousness

of immortal fame, and should have been content if that moment had been my last."

B. 1735. **JOHN ADAMS.** D. 1826.

John Adams cannot be reckoned as unconscious of his claims to greatness. To show how he felt after his defeat by Jefferson, and when he was not even cordially supported by the Federalists, I take from a letter, written by him in 1808, the following extract:

"If my actions have not been sufficient to support my fame, let it perish. No higher ambition remains with me than to build a tomb upon the summit of the hill before my door, covered with a six-foot cube of Quincy granite, with an inscription like this: —

'Siste, Viator!
With much delight these pleasing hills you view,
Where Adams from an envious world withdrew;
Where, sick of glory, faction, power, and pride,
Sure judge how empty all, who all had tried,
Beneath his shades the weary chief reposed,
And life's great scene in quiet virtue closed.'"[1]

Alexander Hamilton supported John Adams for a re-election to the Presidency, but evidently with much reluctance, and preferred Mr. Pinckney, as he made known to many of his Federal associates. In a letter of Mr. Hamilton — not to be found in his published

[1] I know of no more remarkable heredity of talent than that exhibited in the Adams family, continuing conspicuously even to the fourth generation, but all equally "constitutionally incapable of fidelity" to any political party.

works — on "The Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esq., President of the United States," A.D. 1800, besides some cogent arguments adverse to Mr. Adams, Hamilton seems glad to record several illustrative examples of vanity, some of which he says appeared in a journal of Mr. Adams that was sent by the Secretary of State to Congress, perhaps by accident, the reading of which was stopped on the ground that it bore the marks of a private and confidential paper. Hamilton recalls to his recollection the following: —

Being among the guests invited to dine with the Count de Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Adams thought fit to give a specimen of American politeness by conducting Madame de Vergennes to dinner; in the way, she was pleased to make retribution, in the current coin of French politeness, by saying to him, "Monsieur Adams, vous êtes le Washington de negociation." Stating the incident, Mr. Adams makes this comment upon it: "These people have a very pretty knack of paying compliments." "He might have added," says Hamilton, "they have also a very dexterous knack of disguising a sarcasm."

B. 1743. **THOMAS JEFFERSON.** D. 1826.

GREAT and important as were the services of Thomas Jefferson, he was a bitter partisan, and by his resolutions of '98 came near to planting a States-

right obstruction in the pathway of the young Republic which threatened to end its career; but, instead, ended the career of John Adams, and made Jefferson his successor, which may, perhaps, have been the chief part of the original design. Jefferson, as well as John Adams, put a high value upon himself, and pursued his political opponents with vitriolic hatred. His "Anas"—the publication of which is to be lamented—sputter and smoke with charges and insinuations against Hamilton; and he treated Aaron Burr as his friend until Burr's power to serve or injure him was gone forever. The question asked by himself, whether the world was better for his having lived, he answers by a statement in detail of what he had done. That he should have been so embarrassed in his extreme old age as to ask the Virginia legislature for authority to dispose of his property by a lottery, is a melancholy fact; and here again he catalogues his services, truthfully perhaps, but very stoutly. Though he had not escaped the virulence of criticism, he had certainly received more than compensatory public applause during his life, and was now diligent lest "the dull, cold ear of death" should escape being soothed by it afterwards.

Here is one of his items, partly italicized by us:

"If legislative services are worth mentioning, and the stamp of liberality and equality which was necessary to be imposed on our laws, in the first crisis of our birth as a nation, was of any value, *they will find that the leading and most important laws of that day*

were prepared by myself, and carried chiefly by my efforts; supported, indeed, by able and faithful coadjutors from the ranks of the House, *very effective as seconds, but who would not have taken the field as leaders.*"

The acquisition of the mouth of the Mississippi and of the Louisiana Territory, which he might justly have claimed as one of his measures, does not appear in his list, but practically it was the highest in merit.

B. 1742. **ETHAN ALLEN.** D. 1789.

THE conflict of the Green Mountain Boys with the "Yorkers" was as loud in words as in acts. Ethan Allen was not wont to bridle his tongue, especially when flushed with success, and his abuse of Clinton was a torrent that always roared. His bravery in action is not to be disputed; but it may be questioned whether his big words were not always bigger than even his rashest deeds. "Had I but the orders," said he, "I could go to Albany and be head monarch in three weeks, and I have a good mind to do it."

His answer, when asked for his authority to his demand for the surrender of Ticonderoga, "By the authority of the Continental Congress and the Great Jehovah," is well known.

An incident in Allen's life in reference to the capture of Ticonderoga has been often related, and,

whether true or not, it has not been held to be slanderous of the old hero. On the Sunday following the capture, Parson Dewey, in his long prayer, thanked the Lord for the great deliverance. "Parson Dewey, Parson Dewey," was heard in a whisper by those sitting near Allen; but the clergyman was too much absorbed in his own thoughts to notice interruptions, and only continued to thank the "Great Deliverer." "Parson Dewey!" was then heard all over the church by every one except the preacher. Allen could stand it no longer, and shouted in his stentorian voice, "Parson Dewey, just mention that I was there!"

B. 1758. **FISHER AMES.** D. July 4, 1808.

As his biographer says, "Mr. Ames was distinguished among the eminent men of our country, and this eminence is as apparent in his letters as in his brilliant congressional speeches. He was one of the great leaders of the Federal party, among such prominent figures as Alexander Hamilton, Timothy Pickering, Josiah Quincy, and others." Mr. Ames was by no means a vain man, but doubtless much too clever not to know his own power. In 1795 the great contest was upon the funding plan of Hamilton, and the opposition showed their hostility by attempting to strike out the resolution to prolong the temporary taxes to the year 1801. "This at last," writes

Mr. Ames to Christopher Gore, "produced in me what Randolph calls personal excitement, and led me to make a long speech and a loud one, to take away, if possible, their popular cloak, and show, *in puris naturalibus*, the loathness of the party to pay off the debt. It had, because it was plain truth, some effect."

This was very modest, and the only example I have happened to find of self-consciousness in the "Works" of Fisher Ames.

B. 1765. **WILLIAM PINKNEY.** D. 1822.

ORATORS are seldom good listeners, and when a rival speaks, "they would rather hear a cat mew or an axle grate."

William Pinkney, of Maryland, while a member of Congress, made one speech while in the House of Representatives, and one other while in the Senate, but had neither reported, as he feared they might not sustain, when read, the very high reputation won when delivered. He was undoubtedly a great orator, though not less vain of his dress than of his speech; and his eloquence will not perhaps be insufficiently praised if it should be said to equal his vanity. Mr. Samuel Dexter, of Massachusetts, also an eminent lawyer, was replying to Mr. Rush in the Supreme Court, when the latter, turning to Mr. Pinkney, said, "*That* is a very able argument." "Wait till you hear *me*," was the response.

Orators of the same period frequently seem prone to detract from the merits of each other. Cicero and his contemporaries were as much addicted to this habit as Brougham and his English contemporaries.

The "Edinburgh Review" had praised a speech made in Parliament by the late Earl of Normandy, when Brougham wrote to the editor and said the speech was very good, only that it should have been less praised, adding: "He is an excellent fellow, and deserves great credit; but, truth to tell, his speech was a failure, — so much so that *I was forced to bear down to his assistance.*"

B. 1767. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS. D. 1848.

John Quincy Adams, who was the most comprehensively educated of all our Presidents, and of broader culture than his father, greatly distrusted his ability as a debater, but was unrivalled as a controversial writer; and it was after he took service, at the age of sixty-five, in the House of Representatives, that he won the title of the "old man eloquent." His Diary, which has been published, reveals his temper and consciousness of power; and I will cite an entry made March 27, 1835, as follows: —

"Calhoun's tone is so self-sufficient and overbearing, and Webster's reasoning so utterly ignorant or unprincipled, that they provoke my temper, and I answer them with cutting sarcasm. The use of this

weapon is seldom politic. In the present case it would certainly not be so; I should write my speech over again, to say in mild, courteous terms and inoffensive language what I have said in consuming caustic. I can make no use of my speech as now written, and yet it contains matter to grind up into dust Calhoun's and Webster's speeches, and also Calhoun's Patronage Report."

In Professor Hoppin's "Memoir of Henry Armitt Brown" occurs this passage: "He said of a political, notably self-opinionated opponent, who on one occasion was accused by a speaker of his own party of being an infidel, 'An infidel — not so; he is a self-made man, and he worships his creator.'" Upon this the "Nation" remarks that it was long before 1872 that Henry Clapp applied this remark to the late Mr. Greeley.

"How do you know, Mr. Greeley," asked Mr. Curtis, "when you have succeeded in a public address?" To which Mr. Greeley jocosely replied, "When more stay in than go out."

B. 1772. **JOSIAH QUINCY.** D. 1864.

In December, 1809, Mr. Quincy participated in the long debate in the House of Representatives on the conduct of the British Minister, Mr. Jackson, with whom President Madison had declined to hold further diplomatic intercourse, and made one of his most able

and pungent speeches. Fully aware of its merits, he thus refers to it: —

"On the 28th of December I delivered one of the most carefully wrought and studied efforts I ever uttered. It had, of course, no effect at the time, and will probably have no interest in the future, the occasion being personal and temporary; but it was an attempt to remove the opprobrium of uttering for political purposes what to my mind was false. I cannot regret it, it being in my judgment one of the most labored, responsible, and powerful of my efforts."

France prohibited us from trade with England; England prohibited us from trade with France; and as a remedy we adopted non-intercourse with both! Quincy was right; for never was there a more tame surrender, — doing what both required, and wholly to our own injury!

B. 1782. **DANIEL WEBSTER.** D. 1852.

THERE is hardly a scrap of self-applause to be found in Webster's career, — not even in the Boswellian "Reminiscences" of Peter Harvey. Of course Webster knew that all the world never estimated him at any less than the equal of the greatest men of his day, whether at the Bar or in the Senate, but he seems to have been absolutely clear of all vanity.

When his father scolded because Daniel proposed to follow the advice of Mr. Gore and to decline the

offered county-court clerkship, he is reported in Peter Harvey's "Reminiscences" to have said: —

"You may need money, but that is not everything we live for. You yourself would be glad to see your son rise to eminence and be a man among his fellows, — which no man ever was as a clerk of a court. I am more than half inclined to think Mr. Gore's advice is good. It may seem otherwise just now, but I feel a prompting within me that tells me there is something better for me than to be a clerk of court. My mind is made up."

Webster having attacked a legal proposition of an opponent at the bar, was reminded that he was assailing a dictum of Lord Camden; he turned to the court, and after paying a tribute to Camden's greatness as a jurist, simply added, "But, may it please your Honor, *I* differ from Lord Camden." It is very likely that the court thought Webster might, without any vanity, differ from even the eminent Lord Camden.

B. 1782. THOMAS HART BENTON. D. 1858.

In his "Thirty Years in the United States Senate," the late Senator Benton gathered together the most important speeches and acts of the author, to which he makes other Senators play a secondary part; but it is valuable as an authentic view of one side, at least, of the political questions debated during that

time. In his Preface to the work, referring to what Mr. Macaulay had said of the eminent qualifications of Fox and Mackintosh for writing history, "that they had spoken history, acted history, and lived history," Mr. Benton says, "I can say I have these advantages." While this was true, there was a largeness in the application that only a veteran egotist would have risked. "Old Bullion," as his friends loved to call him, because, denouncing paper money, he advocated measures that would make "gold to glisten through the interstices of every man's silken purse," was a man of much intellectual force, sustained by the most vigilant industry, and he must be included among the first dozen statesmen of his country during his era; but he was his own towering darling, and belonged to that class alluded to by Washington Irving when he referred to a man of some pomposity as "a great man, and, in his own estimation, a man of great weight. When he goes to the west, he thinks the east tips up." Mr. Benton, when his famous expunging resolution was upon its final passage after three years of agitation, exclaimed: "*Solitary and alone*, and amidst the jeers and taunts of my opponents, *I put this ball in motion.*"

Colonel Frémont did not marry his daughter, Jessie Benton, so the Senator asserted, but Jessie Benton married Colonel Frémont; and in the notice of the wedding in the newspapers at the time, the name of the lady was put first.

B. 1793. **THADDEUS STEVENS.** D. 1868.

THE repartee of Thad. Stevens was unequalled, and swift wit and dry humor marked his daily career. As an example, not of vanity, but of the "Great Commoner's" hope of intellectual immortality, I will cite his questions to the two stout officers of the House of Representatives who, in his last days, used to carry him in a large arm-chair from his lodgings across the public grounds up the broad stairs of the National Capitol: "Who will be so good to me and take me up in their strong arms when you two mighty men are gone?"

There are some people who imagine they rob themselves by the bestowment of any praise, and that their "basket and store" of merits will be increased by hearty detraction of others. They are rare critics, and will only "look at the reverse side of all tapestry, and see nothing in work not done by themselves but the fag-ends of thread;" but these are all obedient to the maxim, "Never speak evil of yourself; your friends will speak enough."

B. 1794. **WILLIAM C. BRYANT.** D. 1878.

"So shalt thou rest: and what if thou withdraw
Unheeded by the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of Care

Plod on, and each one, as before, will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee."

B. 1795. **DAVID PAUL BROWN.**

This Philadelphia lawyer and eminent platform orator published a work entitled "The Forum," in two thick octavo volumes, where, not content with unveiling his professional success and great merits as a lawyer and orator, he inserted about sixty pages under the head of "*Ornamenta Rationalia;* or, Germs and Gems of Genius," being a few extracts from Shakspeare and other eminent poets, but made up for the most part of blank verses signed "B," of which he was the eminent author; and very blank these "Gems" appear to be. The fame of the distinguished orator is still remembered, with his fine voice and faultless gesticulation, although the poet has vanished, or perhaps never existed. He should have remembered that when Cicero had the vanity to attempt poetry, he only obtained credit for doggerel. A copy of a few of these verses, in the form of scraps, as presented by Mr. Brown, will show what he esteemed most worthy of preservation: —

"Bear up, my soul, and, worthy of thyself,
Endure approaching peril as the past:
Dying as all should die who hope to live
In the proud pages of futurity."

"The gates of Janus open but in war."

"Remember, thou art escort to a *queen* —
That the blue waves which sever adverse shores
Are Lethe's waves — oblivious of the past!"

"I'll be her escort; and with winkless eye
I'll play the Dragon to the Hesperian fruit,
And guard it night and day."

The biography prefixed to "The Forum," referring to the author, says: "It matters little 'to whom related, or by whom begot.'" If true, was it not rather blunt?

B. 1799. **RUFUS CHOATE.** D. 1859.

In his Diary, Mr. Choate is ever prescribing more methodical reading of history and of the classics, and sometimes seems to have had an idea of writing a work on Greece, and sometimes of composing a series of lectures. Unfortunately he did neither. In 1844 he writes: "I seem to myself to think it is within my competence to be master of the law as an administrative science."

Doubtless through life Mr. Choate was considerably annoyed by the abundance of tributes paid to his eloquence at the expense of his sound legal learning; and this may explain his rather emphatic self-assertion as found in his Diary of Sept. 29, 1844: "A little attention to things and persons and reputations about me teaches that uncommon professional exertions are necessary to recover business to live; and a

trial or two teaches me that I can very zealously and very thoroughly, and *con amore*, study and discuss any case. How well I can do so compared with others, I shall not express an opinion on paper — but, if I live, all blockheads which are shaken at certain mental peculiarities shall know and feel a reasoner, a lawyer, and a man of business."

The general verdict now is that he was not only a great orator but a great lawyer.

B. 1803. **RALPH WALDO EMERSON.** D. 1882.

In his essay upon "Greatness," Emerson says:—

"There is a prize we are all aiming at, and the more power and goodness we have, so much more the energy of that aim. Every human being has a right to it, and in the pursuit we do not stand in each other's way. . . . I prefer to call it greatness. It is the fulfilment of a natural tendency in each man. It is a fruitful study. It is the best tonic to the young soul. And no man is unrelated; therefore we admire eminent men, not for themselves, but as representatives. It is very certain that we ought not to be, and shall not be, contented with any goal we have reached. Our aim is no less than greatness; that which invites all belongs to us all — to which we are all sometimes untrue, cowardly, faithless, but of which we never quite despair, and which in every sane moment we resolve to make our own."

In 1827, he wrote in a despondent tone, thus: —

> "I bear in youth the sad infirmities
> That use to undo the limb and sense of age."

But only a few years later he assumes a much loftier tone, and writes: —

> "Has God on thee conferred
> A bodily presence mean as Paul's,
> Yet made thee bearer of a word
> Which sleepy nations as with trumpet calls?"

B. 1804. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. D. 1864.

It would seem that Hawthorne did not win his solid reputation suddenly; and perhaps his brief "Campaign Life of Franklin Pierce" when that gentleman was a candidate for the Presidency, was up to that time his most profitable work, and fortunately won for him the consulship at Liverpool; but his later works have elevated his name to a high place among American authors. He was disposed to criticise and to depreciate, rather than to exalt, his literary productions. As an example, I take from the Preface to his "Twice-told Tales" the following: —

"The author of 'Twice-told Tales' has a claim to one distinction, which, as none of his literary brethren will care about disputing it with him, he must not be afraid to mention. He was for a good many years the obscurest man of letters in America.

"This has been particularly the fortune of the 'Twice-told Tales.' They made no enemies, and were so little known and talked about, that those who read and chanced to like them were apt to conceive the sort of kindness for the book which a person naturally feels for a discovery of his own."

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

B. 1807. D. 1882.

In his poem on the Fiftieth Anniversary of his College Class it will be seen how modestly and delicately he refers to the future:—

> "Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose
> Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose
> And vanished, — we who are about to die
> Salute you! . . .
> Ye do not answer us! ye do not hear!
> We are forgotten; and in your austere
> And calm indifference ye little care
> Whether we come or go, or whence or where.
> What passing generations fill these halls,
> What passing voices echo from these walls,
> Ye heed not; we are only as the blast,
> A moment heard, and then forever past."

This, at least, offers one illustration of the doctrine that "no really great man ever thought himself so;" but Longfellow need have no fear that his name will not be "fast anchored in the deep abyss of time."

B. 1810. **MARGARET FULLER.** D. 1850.

MARGARET FULLER is reported to have made this statement when quite young: "I have now met all the intellects of this country, and find none comparable to my own."

To a friend in Rome, in 1847, she wrote as follows: "I do not know whether I have ever loved at all in the sense of oneness, but I have loved enough to feel the joys of presence, the pangs of absence, the sweetness of hope, and the chill of disappointment. More than once my heart has bled and my bodily health has suffered from these things, but mentally I have always found myself the gainer, always younger and more noble. . . . I have no wish about my future career but that it should be like the past, only always more full and deeper."

B. 1810. **PHINEAS TAYLOR BARNUM.**

THE Autobiography of Barnum is a faithful confession of his successful "humbuggery," including such schemes as "Joice Heth," the "Feejee Mermaid," and the "Woolly Horse." He says: "My grandfather was decidedly a wag. He was a practical joker. He would go farther, wait longer, work harder, and contrive deeper to carry out a practical joke, than for anything else under heaven. . . . It is said by all who knew *him* and have knowledge of *me*, that I am

a chip of the old block." He adds, "I was generally accounted a pretty apt scholar, and, as I increased in years, there were but two or three in school who were considered my superiors." And this is the way he summed up his career as author, orator, and showman, not yet finished, over thirty years ago: —

"As a business man, undoubtedly my prime object has been to put money in my purse. I succeeded beyond my most sanguine anticipations, and am satisfied. But what I have here said will prepare the reader for what I conceive to be a just and altogether reasonable claim, that I have been a public benefactor, to an extent seldom paralleled in the histories of professed and professional philanthropists."

B. 1811. **OWEN LOVEJOY.** D. 1864.

Owen Lovejoy once told me, before he was in Congress, that when he preached a poor sermon he never let it out; for as likely as not half his congregation might call it very good.

Dr. Johnson advised Boswell, "Never speak ill of yourself, because, besides being exaggerated in repetition, it will probably be repeated as the result of direction or discovery by others, and not even your indiscreet frankness will be credited to you."

B. 1816. **JOHN G. SAXE.**

SAXE was the author of some poems as witty as any ever written by Dr. Holmes, and some of his punning pieces are not excelled even by anything of Tom Hood's. In his younger days, as he began to be appreciated in society, he not infrequently exhibited something of natural conceit. A friend met him one morning as he was coming from the sanctum of the "Boston Post," to which paper he was a frequent contributor, as well as to the "Knickerbocker," and upon asking him as to what he was doing, got this reply: "I have just left with Colonel Greene the finest sonnet that has been written since the days of Sir John Suckling."

B. 1817. **HENRY DAVID THOREAU.** D. 1862.

THIS keen observer of the mysteries of Nature was a man of genius who led a quaint sort of semi-hermit life, writing much and with singular force. Unpretentious and modest, he appears only to have wanted a permanent place in the memory of those who knew he loved them in life. He loved the world as he found it. Here is what he says: —

"My greatest skill has been to want but little. For joy I could embrace the earth. I shall rejoice to be buried in it. And then I think of those among men who will know that I loved them though I tell them not."

But he also puts forth this pregnant query: "Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmy that he can?"

B. 1810. **WALT WHITMAN.**

It has been rather wickedly said that every poet feels that he is a boon for which the age that has him should be grateful. This may be true of at least one; and Walt Whitman's poems, patronized though they are by Tennyson, I fear are not winning all the gratitude due from America.

He says: —

"Divine am I, inside and out; I make holy whatever I touch, or am touched from."

Here is one more example of his peculiar style: —

"I conned old times,
I sat studying at the feet of the great masters;
Now, if eligible, oh that the great masters might return and study me!"

In the works of Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, and other eminent American poets, it will, I believe, be difficult to point out a single example of lusty self-appreciation. Walt Whitman does not hesitate to take a reader into his personal confidence, though he may sometimes make the reader blush and wish the poet had been more reticent.

B. 1819. **JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.**

When Mr. Lowell wrote his "Fable for Critics," he undoubtedly feared that his comic reputation derived from his "Biglow Papers" would forever prevent him from acquiring any other fame than that of a born humorist. This is the curious way he then (1848) treated of himself: —

"There's Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb,
With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme:
He might get on alone spite of brambles and boulders,
But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders.
The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching,
Till he learns the distinction between singing and preaching.
His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,
But he'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,
And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,
At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem."

B. 1820. **HENRY W. SHAW.** D. 1885.

(Known as Josh Billings.)

Josh Billings did not know he was a genius until past the meridian of life, and then would not have found it out if he had not seen the writings of Artemas Ward. At forty-five years of age the pay for his first literary work was only $1.50. In spelling wrong he was very successful, and his reason for using phonetic language was set forth as follows: —

"A man has as much rite tew spell a word as it is pronounced as he has to pronounce it the way it aint spelt."

"Noah Webster was a good speller — he had better spells than Billings."

Many of his droll sentences contain both philosophy and wit. Without much research I have found the following: —

"A big genius iz generally a phool: he knows how tew do one or two things so much, that he aint fit for anything else; he iz like a grahound, good for running fast, that is all."

"Men of genius are like eagles, tha live on what tha kill, while men of talent are like crows, tha live on what has been killed for them."

"Lies are like illegitimate children, liable to call a man father when he least expekts it."

"Most people are like eggs, too full of themselves to hold anything else."

"Man was built after all other things had been made and pronounced good. If not, he would have insisted on giving his orders for the rest of the job."

B. 1822. RICHARD GRANT WHITE. D. 1885.

Grant White, in his philological writings, won great credit. Here is a specimen, from "Some alleged Americanisms," of his sledge-hammer confidence in himself: —

"But, I admit, when I see phrases branded in this way as Americanisms, I have pleasure in feeling that after all there is somewhere a shot in my locker that will knock the notion into splinters."

B. 1831. JAMES A. GARFIELD. D. 1881.

THE following words of Garfield when a boy show at least that "the boy was the father of the man:" —

"I mean to make myself a man. If I succeed in that, I shall achieve success in everything else."

B. 1337. JEAN FROISSART. D. 1410.

THIS rather poor poet but charming chronicler travelled much, and seems to have been as adroit as any interviewer employed by an American newspaper to make those he met tell him all they knew, and all for the benefit of the public. He was fully sensible of his special gifts. Here is what he says of himself:

"I had, thanks to God, sense, memory, good remembrance of everything, and an intellect clear and keen to seize upon the acts which I could learn."

Of his famous "Chronicles" he tells us this: "The more I work at it, the better am I pleased with it."

When he visited the Count of Foix,[1] he was received graciously, and was invited by him often to read

[1] Gaston Phœbus, who was stained with the blood of his own son.

aloud his "Méliador" in the evening, during which time, says Froissart, "nobody dared to say a word, because he wished me to be heard; such great delight did he take in listening."

B. 1533. **MICHEL MONTAIGNE.** D. 1592.

It appears that "Old Montaigne" set forth all his foibles and weaknesses, as a notable and singular instance of a confession of the truth about one's self; but that he expected to win some reputation from this eccentricity can hardly be doubted; and perhaps he may also have hoped to be credited with more than sufficient philosophic merits to offset his other follies and undervaluations. He says: —

"What I find tolerable of mine is not so really and in itself, but in comparison of other worse things that I see well enough received. I envy the happiness of those that can please and hug themselves in what they do; for 'tis a very easy way of being pleased, because a man extracts that pleasure from himself, especially if he be constant in his self-conceit."

Again: "I am not ambitious that any one should love and esteem me more dead than living. The humor of Tiberius is ridiculous, but yet common, who was more solicitous to extend his renown to posterity than to render himself acceptable to men of his own time. If I were one of those to whom the world could owe commendation, I would acquit the one half to

have the other in hand, that their praises might come quick and crowding about me, — more thick than long, more full than durable; and let them cease, in God's name, with my knowledge, and when the sweet sound can no longer pierce my ears."

When the king of the French told Montaigne that he liked his book, Montaigne replied, "Then your Majesty must needs like me; my book is myself."

B. 1585. **RICHELIEU.** D. 1642.

Cardinal Richelieu was said to value himself greatly on his personal activity, for his vanity was as universal as his ambition. A nobleman of the house of Grammont one day found him employed in jumping, and, with the *savoir vivre* of a Frenchman and a courtier, offered to jump against him. He suffered the Cardinal to jump higher, and soon found himself rewarded by an appointment.

B. 1612. **MARQUIS OF MONTROSE.** D. 1650.

In his song to "My dear and only love," the Marquis has the following: —

"I'll make thee famous by my pen,
And glorious by my sword."

B. 1636. **NICHOLAS BOILEAU.** D. 1711.

Boileau, the classical French satirist, showed in the epitaph he wrote for himself, that he placed a rather higher estimate upon his merits than posterity has been willing to bestow. He claimed in the epitaph that he was "original even in imitation;" and that he had striven to unite in himself "Horace, Perseus, and Juvenal."

When asked how many great writers the age of Louis XIV. had produced, Boileau answered, "I only know three, — Corneille, Molière, and myself."

B. 1689. **ALEXIS PIRON.** D. 1773.

Piron, a French wit and dramatist, and the author not only of "La Métromanie, ou le poëte," one of the best plays in French literature, but of several which failed, when advised to make some corrections in one of his tragedies, being reminded that Voltaire had often consented to revise his own work, exclaimed, "There is a great difference in the two persons. Voltaire is an embroiderer, and I make figures in bronze."

The French Academy, which he had frequently satirized, nevertheless elected him a member in 1753; but the King refused his assent, on account of a licentious poem composed by Piron in his youth;

whereupon he wrote his own epitaph: "Here lies Piron, who was nothing, not even an Academician!"

When a supercilious host said to a marquis who hesitated to pass in to dinner before Piron, whom he did not know, "Don't be ceremonious, marquis, this gentleman is only a poet," the poet at once stepped to the front, saying, "Since our titles are recognized, I pass first."

B. 1694. **VOLTAIRE.** D. 1778.

VOLTAIRE long reigned supreme as the literary king and wit of France; and when a French translation of Shakspeare brought the works of the latter into notice, he exhibited a good deal of envy and industrious malice. It was found that he had borrowed largely from the English dramatist, and hence hated him as much as he did Moses. He tried to enlist in a crusade against the great English poet all of his friends, and even the French Academy. He was harsh also upon the translator. "The blood dances in my veins," said he to Comte d'Argental, July 19, 1776, "as I write to you about him. . . . It was I who first showed to the French a few pearls that I had found in this enormous dung-heap. I little expected that I should help to tread under foot the crowns of Racine and Voltaire in order to adorn the brow of a barbarian player."

Said Voltaire, "I am tired of hearing it repeated

that twelve men were sufficient to found Christianity: I will show the world that one is sufficient to destroy it."

We will only add that he was mistaken, and so were his followers.

B. 1760. **DUC DE LÉVIS.** D. 1830.

This French Duke used to show an old painting which represented one of his ancestors, as Prince of Judah, bowing to the Virgin Mary, who says, "Couvrez vous, mon cousin." That is, the Virgin Mary, being on familiar terms with the Prince, said, "Put on your hat, my cousin." This was fairly matched by the well-known family of Croy, vain of an equally silly picture, which showed Noah entering the Ark and crying out, "Sauvez les papiers de la maison de Croy!"

B. 1712. **JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.** D. 1778.

In 1760, before his novel "Nouvelle Héloïse" appeared, Rousseau in his "Confessions" says, "The work already began to make a great noise," and, "when it was at length brought out, the success it had, answered, contrary to custom, to the impatience with which it had been expected. The Dauphiness, who was one of the first who read it, spoke of it to M. de Luxembourg as a ravishing performance. The

opinions of men of letters differed from each other; but in those of every class approbation was general, especially with the women, who became so intoxicated with the book and the author that there was not one in high life with whom I might not have succeeded had I undertaken to do it."

In his "Confessions," Rousseau says: "A young man who arrives at Paris with a tolerable figure, and announces himself by his talents, is sure to be well received. This was my good fortune, which procured me some pleasures without leading to anything solid."

On the death of Louis XV., Rousseau remarked: "There were two despised men in France, the King and I: I am now alone."

B. 1759. GEORGE JACQUES DANTON. D. 1794.

When Danton was brought to the bloody block to which he had aided to bring many others, after casting a look of contempt at the crowd, he said to the executioner, "Thou wilt show my head to the people: it deserves to be seen by them."

When Robespierre caused Danton to be arrested and brought before the Revolutionary tribunal, rather for sentence than for trial, Danton responded, as Lamartine says, "as a man who despised life as much as the accusation, and accepted the judgment of futurity." Rising and speaking with indignation,

he said: "The cowards who calumniate me, would they dare to attack me face to face? Let them show themselves, and I will soon load them with the ignominy which characterizes them! As for the rest, I have said, and I repeat it, that my domicile will soon be nowhere, and my name in the Pantheon. My head is there: it answers for all. Life is a care to me: I am anxious to be rid of it! Men of my temper are beyond price."

When asked at his trial his name and place of abode, he answered, "My name is Danton, — a name tolerably well known in the Revolution; my abode will soon be in annihilation, but I shall live in the pantheon of history."

B. 1768. **CHÂTEAUBRIAND.** D. 1848.

CHÂTEAUBRIAND was felt to be dangerous by Napoleon, and was therefore imprisoned for several years. Speaking of this fact, Châteaubriand says: "The genius of my former greatness and of my glory, represented by a life of thirty years, did not make its appearance before me; but my Muse of former days, poor and humble as she was, came all radiant to embrace me through my window. She was delighted with my abode, and full of inspiration."

Again he says, "May I be permitted to mention myself as an instance?" And in the next paragraph he parades himself in the plural "we," saying: "We

no longer blush to confess our own merits, and to proclaim all the gifts which bountiful Nature has bestowed upon us. Hear us speak of ourselves: We have the kindness to take upon ourselves all the expense of the praises which people were preparing to give us; we charitably enlighten the reader respecting our merits; we teach him to relish our beauties; we soothe his enthusiasm; we seek his admiration at the bottom of his heart; we spare his delicacy the task of discovering it to us himself.

"Every one of us, in his conscience and most sincerely, believes himself to be the man of our age; the man who has opened a new career; the man who has eclipsed the past; the man in whose presence all reputations dwindle to nothing; the man who will survive and alone survive; the man of posterity, the man of the renovation of things, the man of the future.

"*We* modern great men count upon filling the world with our renown; but, do what we may, it will scarcely pass the limits where our language expires.

"In me commenced, with the school called Romantic, a revolution in French literature."

Châteaubriand was very fond of comparing himself with Byron, though his poetry was no longer read even by Frenchmen, and runs a parallel thus: "He was a boy; I was young, and as unknown as he. I was destined to precede him in the career of letters, and to remain in it after him. He had been brought up on the heaths of Scotland, on the sea-shore, as I

had been on the heaths of Brittany, on the sea-shore. He was at first fond of the Bible and Ossian, as I was fond of them. He sang in Newstead Abbey the recollections of childhood, as I sang them in the Castle of St. Malo."

Here is a confession evidently heartfelt: "What is more delicious than admiration?"

"Lord Byron will live, whether as a child of his age, *like me*, he has expressed *like me*, and like Goethe before us both, passion and wretchedness; and whether my peregrinations and the poop-lantern of my Gallic bark have pointed out the track to the vessel of Albion upon unexplored seas."

He imagined that Byron had somehow copied his heroes from him, and was irritated because Byron had never made the slightest reference to any of his voluminous works. "Could he," said he, "have had the weakness never to mention me? Am I, then, one of those fathers whom one denies when one has arrived at power? Is it possible that I can have been wholly unknown to Lord Byron, though he quotes almost all the French authors his contemporaries?"

Of Mirabeau, Châteaubriand relates that when a young man he met and sat next to him at dinner, where the conversation turned upon the subject of Mirabeau's enemies. Being a young man, he had not uttered a word; but Mirabeau, he says, "looked me full in the face with his eyes of wickedness and genius, and, laying his broad hand on my shoulder, said, 'They will never forgive me my superiority.'"

Châteaubriand in 1807 spent six weeks at Tunis, and devoted but a half-hour to the ruins of Carthage. Previously he had resided several days at Cairo without visiting the Pyramids; but this did not leave him without ambition to have his name carved on their lofty and enduring summits. "Je chargea M. Caffe," he says, "d'écrire mon nom sur ces grands tombeaux, selon l'usage, à la première occasion: l'on doit remplir tous les petits devoirs d'un pieux voyageur."

B. 1768. **CHARLOTTE CORDAY.** Executed 1793.

This heroine was fully conscious, even proud, of her heroic termination of the life of Marat. When the executioner came into her prison and had cut off her long and beautiful hair, bound her hands, and put on the red *chemise des condamnés*, she truly said, "This is the toilet of death, arranged by somewhat rude hands, but it leads to immortality."

B. 1769. **NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.** D. 1821.

Many of the famous men of history, it would appear, have not been bashful in asserting their own merits. Napoleon said, "There is nothing in war which I cannot do with my own hands."

"After all, what have I done?" he exclaimed one day, as if to stop the mouth of a flatterer. "Is it

anything compared with what Christ has done?" It is evident that he felt any empire mightier than his own must have been more than mortal.

He told Las Casas that it was after storming the Bridge at Lodi "that he first conceived he was to do great things." Shortly after his entry into Milan, in the same year, some one hinted to him that, with his vast reputation, it must be no difficult matter to establish himself permanently in that duchy. "There is a finer throne than that vacant," responded (says Alison) the future successor of Charlemagne.

It is perhaps true that brilliant speech-makers are not always the wisest counsellors. "The great orators," said Napoleon, "who rule the assemblies by the brilliancy of their eloquence, are in general men of the most mediocre talents. They should not be opposed in their own way, for they have always more noisy words at command than you. In my council there were men possessed of much more eloquence than I was, but I always defeated them by this simple argument, — two and two make four."

When one of Napoleon's marshals handed to the Emperor a book from an upper shelf with the remark, "I am higher than you, Sire," — "Longer, not higher," responded Napoleon.

Bourienne records his love of applause as follows: Said Napoleon one day when returning from parade, "Bourienne, do you hear those acclamations which still continue? They are as sweet to me as the voice of Josephine."

Metternich declares he had often heard Napoleon say, "They call me lucky because I am able: it is weak men who accuse the strong of good fortune."

From the same source I take the following anecdote:

One day at St. Cloud Napoleon had had a dangerous fall. He had been thrown out of a carriage on to a great block of stone, narrowly escaping severe injury to his stomach. The next day, when Metternich inquired how he was, he replied very gravely: "I yesterday completed my experiences on the power of the will: when I was struck on the stomach I felt my life going; I had only just time to say to myself that I did not wish to die, and I live! Any one else in my place would have died."[1]

When a friend of Madame de Staël pleaded with Napoleon for her return from exile, Napoleon replied: "They pretend that she speaks neither of politics nor of me; but how then does it come to pass that all who see her like me less?"

A long series of almost uninterrupted successes made Napoleon vain and self-confident; but the flattery of his followers was most excessive, and now appears almost incredible. They often said, "God created Napoleon, and rested!"

[1] "The ball that is to hit me," said Napoleon, "has not yet been cast."

On the morning of the battle at Marengo, Dessaix, one of the bravest of Napoleon's generals, having a presentiment of death, observed to one of his aides-de-camp, "It is a long time since I fought in Europe. The bullets won't know me again. Something will happen." The curious inference appears to be that nothing would happen if the bullets had not forgotten him.

At the time Josephine, the young widow of General de Beauharnais, was being pressed with the suit of Bonaparte, she wrote to a friend among other things as follows: —

"Barras gives assurance that if I marry the general, he will so contrive as to have him appointed to the command of the army of Italy. Yesterday Bonaparte, speaking of this favor, which already excites murmuring among his fellow-soldiers, though it be yet only a promise, said to me, 'Think they, then, I have need of their protection to arrive at power? Egregious mistake! They will all be but too happy one day should I condescend to grant them mine. My sword is by my side, and with it I will go far.'"

After Napoleon's victories in Italy, and just before he received the title of President of the Cisalpine Republic, he is reported to have expressed the following prophecy to Josephine in the palace of the Tuileries: "Behold a place without nobles; in time I intend to render it worthy of his palace who is yet to become the master and arbiter of the world."

When his sisters sought honors due to their relationship, Napoleon curtly responded, "One would think from your pretensions, ladies, that we had inherited the crown from our father." He took the apartments of Louis XVI. with great parade, and Madame Rémusat says that she "heard from his wife (Josephine) that, on the day he established himself in the Tuileries, he said to her, laughing, 'Come, my little Creole, come and put yourself into the bed of

your masters.'" Napoleon was a bad speller, and excused it by saying, "A man occupied with public business cannot attend to orthography."

B. 1769. **MARSHAL NEY.** Executed 1815.

THE fickleness of Marshal Ney and his tragical execution have excited some pity. When the command of the troops was given to him by Louis XVIII., upon the Hundred Days' invasion by Napoleon, he made a dashing speech to the king, declaring that he would "bring back the monster in an iron cage." Instead of this, he joined the "monster" at first sight, and for this treachery was subsequently shot.

B. 1792. **ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE.** D. 1869.

LAMARTINE, after greatly extolling his mother's mind and beauty, added that he was just like her.

PIERRE DE CORBIAC.

PIERRE DE CORBIAC, a poet among the Troubadours of the South of France about the thirteenth century, wrote thus of himself: —

"I am rich in mind; and though I have no great inheritance, castles, hamlets, and other domains, — although I have neither gold, silver, nor silk, no

other wealth than my own person, — I am nevertheless not poor. I am even richer than a man who has a thousand golden marks. I was born at Corbiac, where I have relatives and friends. My income is moderate, but my courtesy and my intelligence make me live respected by gentlefolks. I walk with my head erect, like a rich man; and, indeed, I am one, as I have collected a treasure (knowledge)."

B. 1802. **MARIE VICTOR HUGO.** D. 1885.

Victor Hugo, when only fourteen years of age, wrote on the 10th of July, 1816, in the journal he kept, "I will be Châteaubriand, or no one." The next year he competed for the prize in poetry offered by the French Academy, and was honorably mentioned. If he had not stated his age as fifteen, which was not believed, possibly he might have won the prize.

The vanity as well as the literary ability of Victor Hugo was almost boundless, and his egoism colossal. He is said to have considered himself the greatest man of the century and the greatest poet that ever lived. During the siege of Paris, when the sufferings of the citizens were extreme, and with no prospect of relief, the following instance of his pretensions has been related: One night in the family circle Hugo declared in measured tones: "To-morrow I will go forth on to the ramparts; I will allow myself to be

killed by a bullet; the Prussians will have killed Victor Hugo, and the war will be at an end." "Yes, at an end for you!" replied Louis Ulbach, who was present, and whom Hugo never forgave.

B. 1797. **LOUIS-ADOLPHE THIERS.**

PERHAPS no man has expressed more tersely what must, in all places and in all times, be held to be a proper and laudable ambition than Thiers when he spoke as follows: "I set value on being remembered with honor."

B. 1803. **ALEXANDRE DUMAS.** D. 1870.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS and his son — almost as famous as his father — equally bragged about each other. The father called his son "a wonder of Nature," and the son called his father "a prodigy." They felt the most playful and good-humored affection for each other: that of the younger being tender and demonstrative. "My father," he used to say, "is a great child I had when I was little."

B. 1749. **GABRIEL HONORE MIRABEAU.** D. 1791.

MIRABEAU once remarked, "You know not the power of my ugliness." He wrote also to a lady who had never met him, "Figure to yourself a tiger who has had the small-pox."

B. 1803. **PROSPER MÉRIMÉE.** D. 1870.

Prosper Mérimée, in 1853 a Senator of France, remarked to a friend, "I felt uneasy when I had to make my first speech in the Senate; but I soon took courage, remembering that I was only addressing one hundred and fifty fools."

B. 1805. **ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE.** D. 1855.

In the Preface to the "Ancien Régime," the author rather modestly writes:—

"I may say, I think without undue self-laudation, that this book is the fruit of great labor. I could point to more than one short chapter that has cost me over a year's work. I could have loaded my pages with foot-notes; but I have preferred inserting a few only, and placing them at the end of the volume, with a reference to the pages to which they apply."

B. 1808. **LOUIS NAPOLEON.** D. 1873.

Louis, sometimes called Napoleon III., or Napoleon the Little, thought he had in him the quality of a great general as well as of a great statesman, and was with difficulty dissuaded from taking the command of the French army in the Crimean war. At Plombières he said to Count Cavour, "Do you know

that there are but three men in all Europe? One is myself, the second is you, and the third is one whose name I will not mention." Doubtless Bismarck was intended as the third; and Louis was not far wrong, except in the overestimate of himself, where, as usual, through rank usurpation he took a place to which he had no claim.

B. 1820. **CHAMBORD.**

THE Comte de Chambord might have been Henry V. King of France, in 1873, only that he insisted upon his own terms, — his divine right to reign, — proving his Bourbon legitimacy of learning nothing and forgetting nothing. Said he, "I am the pilot who alone is able to guide the vessel into the port." His vanity gave the Republic time to take root, and the Count will never wear any other title; but, oh the difference to him!

FRANÇOIS PIERRE GUILLAUME GUIZOT.

B. 1787. D. 1874.

GUIZOT, of old Huguenot stock and educated at Geneva, was both a statesman and an author. Like Gladstone, he seems to have put his conscience into all of his work. He was a Protestant, and would not promise to say a word in favor of Louis XVIII., even to gain admission to his Cabinet. He did not believe

in absolutism. Politically Thiers was his rival, and said of him, "He is a great orator, but a mere fool in statesmanship." He was sent as Ambassador to England, where he thought his mission a success, and writes as follows: —

"From 1832 to 1835, I take it, I did more than any one else to keep order at home. In 1840 and 1841 I shall have done the same for peace abroad. Were I at once to retire from public life, I should, I think, take with me the respect of Europe. I shall try not to lose it."

In his old age, without vanity, he did not belittle his life, and his words are thus recorded: "I don't complain, as many do, that public life has deceived me; that I am disgusted with men and with the world; that I 've no more ambition. It is not true; public life has not cheated my expectations. I take the same interest in politics that I did at twenty, neither more nor less."

Great men are often prone to undervalue each other. Thiers had a low opinion of Guizot, which was probably reciprocated; and certainly Guizot bestowed upon Bismarck, in 1864, no flattery when he said: "He is the only man in Europe who has a settled plan and is bent on following it out. He is neither sensible nor honest, but this makes him somebody."

B. 1265. **DANTE ALIGHIERI.** D. 1321.

DANTE speaks of Alexander Gill, his old schoolmaster, as one who "taught him how man eternizes himself."

The Government of Florence banished Dante in 1302, but in 1316 put forth a new decree permitting exiles to return on conditions of fine and penance; but Dante rejected the offer with great scorn. "Is this," wrote he, "then, the glorious return of Dante Alighieri to his country after nearly three lustres of suffering exile? Did an innocence, patent to all, merit this? This the perpetual sweat and toil of study? Far from a man, the housemate of philosophy, be so rash and earthen-hearted a humility as to allow himself to be offered up, bound like a schoolboy or a criminal! Far from a man, the preacher of justice, to pay those who have done him wrong, as a favor! This is not the way of returning to my country; but if another can be found that shall not derogate from the fame of Dante, that I will enter on with no lagging steps. For if by none such Florence may be entered, by me then never! Can I not everywhere behold the mirrors of the sun and stars, — speculate on sweetest truths under any sky, — without first giving myself up inglorious, nay, ignominious, to the populace and city of Florence? Nor shall I want bread."

The last lines of an inscription he dictated on his

death-bed, for his monument, show that he never returned to Florence: —

"Here am I, Dante, shut, exiled from the ancestral shore,
Whom Florence, the of all least-loving mother, bore."

And yet in 1396, and again in 1429, Florence begged in vain for the ashes of the poet she threatened to destroy when alive.

Dante unceremoniously classifies himself with the great poets.[1] That rank the world has most cheerfully accorded. If Charles Sumner was not displeased, when walking through the streets of cities, to have those who passed him turn and say, "There goes Charles Sumner," Dante, also, was not displeased to be noticed even by the women seated in the doorways as he passed them in the streets of Verona, where one of them said, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the poet, "There goes the man who can go down to hell and come back again whenever he chooses, bringing with him accounts of the people who are there." One of her companions replied, in all simplicity, "What you say is quite true. Do you not see that the heat and the smoke have frizzled his beard and blackened his hair?" Dante, knowing the simple manner in which this was said, was rather amused to hear what people thought of him, and went on his way with a smile. Of course the world would never have known this, had not Dante told of it himself.

[1] "Vidi quattro grand' ombre a ma venire."

During his stay at Verona, Dante was a frequent guest of the governor of the city, who had greatly befriended him, and to whom, in return for his kindness, the poet dedicated "Il Paradiso." One day it happened that the governor, while at table, related some unseemly jest, and made merry over it, his guests joining in the indecorous mirth. Dante, who held such jokes in abhorrence, did not conceal his annoyance; and his host perceiving it, asked him why he abstained from joining the general merriment. The poet replied with some hauteur, "Your surprise will cease if you remember that it requires similarity of tastes to enable me to enter into other people's jokes."

In the course of one of his leisurely rambles, Dante chanced to come upon a smith who, while beating the iron upon the anvil, was singing some stanzas of the "Divina Commedia," and murdering them to an extent which greatly irritated their author. Without uttering a word, he stepped into the smithy, and taking up the hammers, pincers, scales, and other tools he saw lying about, he dashed them to the ground, saying to the smith, "If you do not want me to injure your work, for goodness' sake let mine alone!"

Another time he encountered a muleteer who, while following his beasts, was reciting, after his own fashion, some parts of the "Purgatorio," and in the pauses of his declamation whipped up the mules, exclaiming, "Get on, get on!" Dante, on hearing this, dealt him a sound blow on the back, saying angrily,

"I never wrote 'get on, get on'!" The peasant, not knowing who Dante was, nor why he acted in so strange a manner, thrust out his tongue with a gesture of contempt, exclaiming, "Take that!" "A hundred tongues such as yours," replied the poet, "would not be worth one like mine."

Such incidents as these furnish sufficient proof that Dante was no more unconscious of his merits than is Matthew Arnold, who places him above Milton. Dante has also furnished ill-natured persons some reason for inventing other stories illustrative of his petty failings.

B. 1304. **PETRARCH.** D. 1374.

PETRARCH loved the fame of more sonnets better than Laura, as was shown by his reply when the Pope offered to absolve him from his vows of celibacy. "I have," said he, "still too many sonnets to write."

MICHAEL ANGELO BUONAROTTI.

B. 1474. D. 1564.

MICHAEL ANGELO was great as a sculptor, painter, and architect, and was also the author of many sonnets. He was possibly best satisfied with his works as sculptor, until he painted the frescos in the Sistine Chapel; and then possibly best pleased with his fame as a painter, until he achieved even a greater reputa-

tion as an architect, especially of St. Peter's at Rome. At a time when he thought Pope Julius II. listened too much to his enemies, he wrote this sonnet: —

TO POPE JULIUS II.

My lord! if ever ancient saw spake sooth,
  Hear this which saith: Who can, doth never will.
  Lo! thou hast but thine ear to fables still,
Rewarding those who hate the name of truth.
I am thy drudge, and have been from my youth, —
  Thine, like the rays which the sun's circle fill;
  Yet of my dear time's waste thou think'st no ill:
The more I toil, the less I move thy ruth.
  Once, 't was my hope to raise me by thy height;
But 't is the balance and the powerful sword
  Of Justice, not false Echo, that we need.
  Heaven, as it seems, plants virtue in despite
Here on the earth, if this be our reward, —
  To seek for fruit on trees too dry to breed.

Michael Angelo was employed for many years on his work of St. Peter's without pay, and was often badly treated by those around him; but although this was the work of his old age, it was a great work, and he never lost confidence in himself. The following is an extract from one of his letters, showing that he believed he had been chosen by God for this work:

"I have always held it to be a condition not to leave Rome till I have carried on the building of St. Peter's so far that it cannot be altered from my design nor spoilt; and also not to give an opportunity to robbers to return and to plunder, as they did before and hope to do again. These have been my objects,

and are so still,—to carry out which many believe, as I do, that I have been chosen by God."

Having no children, Michael Angelo, near the close of his life, said, "My works are the children I shall leave; and if they are not worth much, they will at least live for some time."

B. 1809. **COUNT CAVOUR.** D. 1860.

In 1853, long before the revolution in Italy brought Count Cavour to the front, he wrote to a lady as follows: —

"I am very grateful, madame, for the interest you are kind enough to take in my misfortunes; but I assure you I shall make my way notwithstanding. I own I am ambitious, — enormously ambitious, — and when I am minister I hope I shall justify my ambition. In my dreams I see myself already Minister of the Kingdom of Italy."

That dream came to pass.

B. 1483. **MARTIN LUTHER.** D. 1546.

When Martin Luther first denied the right of the Pope to grant indulgences or to forgive sins, his indignation was particularly excited by the traffic of John Tetzel, a Dominican friar who was active in raising funds by the sale of the Pope's indulgences; and Luther exclaimed, "God willing, I will beat a hole in his drum!"

B. 1571. JOHANN KEPLER. D. 1630.

KEPLER, after his immortal work of twenty-two years, and the discovery of the so-called *harmonic laws*,[1] or the relations of the planets, could say with rapture, and without much vanity : —

"The die is cast; I have written my book; it will be read either in the present age or by posterity, it matters not which; it may well await a reader, since God has waited six thousand years for an interpreter of his works."

CHRISTOPHER MARTIN WIELAND.

B. 1733. D. 1813.

"YOU, my friend, know me well enough to know that I am satisfied with my lot in every point of view. . . . But I should arrogate to myself a merit to which I have no claim, were I to deny that, after spending the greater part of my life in the service of the Muses, I have done more for myself than for others. It was pure truth, and will probably remain true to the end of my days, that I said to my Muse, from the fulness of my heart, more than fifteen years

[1] The laws are: First, all planets describe ellipses around the sun; Second, a line joining the planet and sun sweeps over equal areas in equal times; Third, the squares of the periodic times of the planets are proportioned to the cubes of their mean distances from the sun.

ago, when living at the furthest extreme of South Germany, entirely excluded from our Parnassus, and without any literary connections, —

'If thou pleasest not, if world and connoisseur agree
To disparage thy merit,
Let thy consolation be, in this calamity,
That with sweet pains thou hast conferred much joy on me.
Thou art still, O Muse! the happiness of my life,
And if no one listens to thee, thou singest to me alone.'"

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE.

B. 1744. D. 1832.

THIS many-sided German author lived to a great age, and never seemed too old for good work. While fully conscious of his own leadership at Weimar, he had no jealousy of others whether at home or abroad. Of himself he says: —

"If I were to say what I had really been to the Germans in general, and to the young German poets in particular, I should say I had been their liberator."

He has also repeatedly said: "As for what I have done as a poet, I take no pride in it whatever. But that in my century *I* am the only person who knows the truth in the difficult science of colors, — of that, I say, I am not a little proud. There I have a consciousness of superiority to many."

How Goethe could have exalted his "Theory of Colors" above his "Wilhelm Meister" or above his "Faust," may be a marvel; but unquestionably he had

some claims to distinction in scientific pursuits, and he is not the only example of those who have overrated their dullest offspring.

"Where yet was ever found a mother
Who 'd give her booby for another?"

B. 1770. **BEETHOVEN.** D. 1827.

THERE is no question as to the musical gifts and great genius of Ludwig van Beethoven; and when he was dying, he did not hesitate to assert the fact to his friend, the eminent pianist Hummel, —

"Pourtant, Hummel, j'ai du génie!"
("For all that, Hummel, I have genius.")

B. 1773. **PRINCE METTERNICH.** D. 1859.

PRINCE METTERNICH of Austria, the great Chancellor of Francis I., wielded immense political power in Europe during great historical events, and for a great number of years. In questions of State he had to grapple with masters in diplomacy, — with Canning, Wellington, Nesselrode, and Napoleon; and there is no doubt that Austria under his lead reached its highest position among nations. Kings and emperors were battling for thrones, and Metternich was the prince of aristocrats, though the life-long slave of royalty, whose prerogatives he upheld with a vigor

and tenacity which secured the admiration of his masters and the hatred of all liberal-minded men.

The following is copied from a letter of Metternich to his wife, Aug. 26, 1818: —

"I shall be at Frankfort on the 29th, and spend two days there. I shall have the entire Diet on my hands. I know already that most of the ministers there are trembling at my appearance; of my forty-eight hours, I shall take at least from twelve to fifteen to lecture the well-intentioned, and to do justice to those who are not. My two days at Frankfort will, however, be worth at least a hundred as far as business is concerned."

Having been foolishly lauded in the Paris "Moniteur," January, 1820, he wrote to one of his correspondents: —

"To me undoubtedly, I openly allow, stupid blame is pleasanter than stupid praise: the first may amuse, but cannot anger me; the latter, on the contrary, might make me treat my awkward friend somewhat rudely.

"If any one wishes to write my history, let him have full freedom to the judgment of posterity, which alone can speak with authority of the men who have contributed to make the history of their time."

1820, April 19. "Posterity will judge me, — the only judgment which I covet; the only one to which I am not indifferent, and which I shall never know."

1820, May 15. "On this day, in the year 1773, precisely at twelve o'clock, I was presented to the world."

"Seven and forty years is a long time, quite too long. I have in this weary life, thank God! preserved that strong vitality of heart which is a preservative against the passing away of any feeling. At twenty I was the same man I am to-day. I was always what I am, good or bad, strong or weak."

1820, March 22. "My poor Clementine [his daughter] is still very ill. Nothing breaks me down like a sick child; never anxious about myself, I am always so for the children.

"Meanwhile, whether I like it or not, I must sit for many hours at my writing-table. In painful moments like the present, it is more than ever necessary to turn my second nature outside, — that nature which makes many people believe that I have no heart. They would deny me head too, if I did not occasionally let them know that it remains firm when they knock at it."

From Metternich's letter to his son Victor, May 31, 1826: —

"The Liberals have a peculiar talent for deceiving themselves; the reason is, that their cause rests on error, and knows not how to produce anything else! To defeat these men one has only to wait; to reach them, one has but to stand still. But herein lies the difficulty of the work: and if God has given me one quality, it is that of being able to support the State, firm and upright, in the midst of tumult. This is what I have known how to do ever since I have been at the head of affairs; and certainly I shall not

discontinue what I have found so valuable a specific. When I look around me and find only myself standing on a field strewn with dead and wounded, I must say decidedly that I have chosen a good place! They shall never make more, and the Liberals, with their whole following of fools and doctrinaires, shall not win the day as long as God gives me strength."

From a letter to Neumann, June 12, 1826: —

"Men like Canning fall twenty times and rise twenty times; men like myself have not the trouble of getting up, for they are not so subject to fall."

From letters to his son Victor, Jan. 24, 1818: —

"I have observed affairs too closely, and Heaven has given me too sure an instinct, that I should not have some foresight. This is what M. de Villèle lacked. He was a man of business, not a statesman."

"My attention and my efforts are directed towards England and Turkey. Canning wished to kill me; it is I who have killed him and his feeble acolytes. There are resources in England, for there is a public spirit; and it is this very spirit that is wanting in France. That country is rotten to the core."

On his fifty-fifth anniversary he wrote to his son:

"I desire to live to guide your career, to put our domestic affairs on a footing that will give you the least possible difficulty. I wish to live, too, for public matters, since the world yet has need of me, were it only that I hold a place which no one else could fill. To be what I am, my antecedents are necessary, and one can as little replace an old minister as an old tree."

B. 1797. **HEINRICH HEINE.** D. 1856.

See how gently he waives the laurel-wreath, while most anxious to clutch more than its equivalent: —

"I know not if I deserve that a laurel-wreath should one day be laid on my coffin. Poetry, dearly as I have loved it, has always been to me but a divine plaything. I have never attached any great value to poetical fame; and I trouble myself very little whether people praise my verses or blame them. But lay on my coffin a *sword:* for I was a brave soldier in the war of liberation of humanity."

B. 1814. **PRINCE BISMARCK.**

Bismarck appears quite conscious of the power he has so long held behind the Throne; and the "mild absolutism" which he prompted has been a perpetual strain upon the government of his King. "If," said Bismarck, "the King could stand the strain on him for three or four years — and I allowed there was one, the estrangement of the public being very painful and disagreeable to him — he would certainly win his game. Unless he got tired and left me in the lurch, I would not fail him. If he were to appeal to the people, and put it to the vote, he would even now have nine tenths of them in his favor. The Emperor, at the time (1855), said of me, *Ce n'est pas un homme sérieux* ["He is not a man of consequence"],

a *mot* of which I did not think myself at liberty to remind him in the weaving-shed at Doncherry."

While in attendance upon the siege of Paris, Bismarck was impatient of delay, and really believed he might have cut a larger figure if he had been an officer. At dinner (December 24) he observed, "Had I been an officer, — and I wish I had been, — I should have had an army now, and we should not have been stuck here outside of Paris."

B. 1370. CARDINAL BEAUFORT. D. 1447.

(Bishop of Winchester.)

The Cardinal, son of John of Gaunt, was early promoted to the wealthy See of Winchester, and after the death of Henry V. became the powerful rival of the Duke of Gloucester. The latter having been arrested, suddenly died, not without suspicion, in the time of Shakspeare, of poison. The death of the Cardinal, after a lingering sickness, occurred a few weeks later. To those about his bedside, although seventy-seven years old, he said, "Wherefore should I die, being so rich? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it or by wealth to buy it. Will not death be bribed? Will money do nothing?"

B. 1471. **CARDINAL WOLSEY.** D. 1530.

Cardinal Wolsey's famous insolence, *Ego et rex meus* ("I and my king"), he apologized for by observing that it was conformable to the Latin idiom, and that the Roman always placed himself before the person of whom he spoke.

Johnson, in his "Vanity of Human Wishes," gives a full-length picture of Wolsey, beginning with the words: —

> "In full-blown dignity, see Wolsey stand,
> Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand."

Shakspeare also makes a fine use of the rise and fall of this historic character in his "King Henry VIII." At his downfall Wolsey thus speaks: —

> "Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!
> This is the state of man. To-day he puts forth
> The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
> And bears his blushing honors thick upon him."

And finally thus laments his fate: —

> "Had I but served my God with half the zeal
> I served my king, he would not in my age
> Have left me naked to mine enemies."

B. 1500. **THE DUKE OF SOMERSET.** D. 1552.

The Duke, whose conceit was in his high rank and his long line of forefathers, once declared that he sincerely pitied Adam because he had no ancestors.

B. 1533. **QUEEN ELIZABETH.** D. 1602.

When the Lord Keeper, with others, came to the Queen, just before her death, to inquire, in the name of the Council, her pleasure as to who should succeed, she thus replied: —

"I told you my seat had been the seat of kings, and I will have no rascal to succeed me. And who should succeed me but a king?"

The Lords asking what she meant by these words, she answered that her meaning was that a king should succeed; "and who should that be but our cousin of Scotland?"

Among other anecdotes concerning Queen Elizabeth, Sir James Melvil, while he was near her on a mission from Queen Mary of Scotland, relates how he evaded the question as to what colored hair was most admired (Elizabeth's being more reddish than yellow and naturally curling), but was less scrupulous in declaring his mistress the tallest. "Then," said Elizabeth, "she is too high, for I myself am neither too high nor too low."

B. 1551. **SIR EDWARD COKE.** D. 1633.

Sir Edward Coke, though esteemed pedantic by lawyers, was a learned and most prolific writer, and among the "thirty books which he had written with his own hand," he declared that the "most pleasing

to himself was a manual which he called 'Vade Mecum,' from whence at one view he took a prospect of his life past." A slave to the Crown while he was Attorney-General, he did not hesitate to assert himself when advanced to be judge. Among other assumptions he had styled himself Lord Chief Justice of England, when it was declared that "his title was his own invention, since he was no more than of the King's Bench."

So our late Chief Justice Chase, on the Johnson Impeachment trial, assumed the title of Chief Justice of the United States, though only the chief of the Supreme Court.

When Sir Edward Coke was in the Tower, he was informed that the King would allow him "eight of the best learned in the law to advise him for his cause." The great lawyer thanked him, but said he "knew himself to be accounted to have as much skill in the law as any man in England, and therefore needed no such help, nor feared to be judged by the law."

When Bacon published his "Novum Organum," thought by many to be the greatest work of the human intellect, he sent a copy to Sir Edward Coke, who expressed his contempt for the author by writing the following distich on the titlepage, which bore a cut of a ship sailing through the Pillars of Hercules: —

> "It deserveth not to be read in schools,
> But to be freighted in the ship of fools."

B. 1561. **FRANCIS BACON.** D. 1626.

Bacon in all his early life was a sturdy beggar for office; and there was too much of truth in Pope's characterization when he wrote him down forever as "the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind." While he was still young he told his uncle that he had "taken all knowledge for his province." When old, and after his fall, still ambitious to give advice to great men, he wrote to Buckingham as follows: —

"But when I look abroad and see the times so stirring, and so much dissimulation, falsehood, baseness, and envy in the world, and so many idle clocks going in men's heads; then it grieveth me much that I mought give you some of the fruits of the careful advice, modest liberty, and true information of a friend that loveth your lordship as I do."

The theory of unconscious genius in its grandest developments cannot be sustained by anything in the history of Bacon. In spite of his disgrace, he was confident of his intellectual merits to the last, and died, as he himself said, leaving "his name and memory to foreign nations, and to mine own countrymen after some time is passed over."

Referring to his remarkable Essays, Bacon was not unconscious of his power, or of the lustre and reputation these "recreations of his other studies" would yield to his name.

Again he says: "He that plots to be a figure among ciphers is the decay of a whole age."

When Bacon became Attorney-General, he addressed a tract to King James, professing his willingness to resume his labors upon the subject of "A Proposal for Amending the Laws of England," and wrote with intense consciousness of his own great ability: —

"I do assure your Majesty, and am in good hope that when Sir Edward Coke's reports and my rules and decisions shall come to posterity, there will be, whatsoever is now thought, [no] question who was the greater lawyer."

Bacon comforted himself for his lack of offspring by recollecting the instances from which he drew his saying, "Great men have no continuance."

Bacon says that "Socrates, Aristotle, and Galen were men full of ostentation;" and that "the vanity of Cicero and Seneca, like the varnish of ceilings, made them to shine and to last."

In his preface to "The Reign of Henry VII." plainly thinking that he could do better than previous historians, he says: —

"I am delivered of the excuse wherewith the best writers of history are troubled in their proems, when they go about, without breaking the bounds of modesty, to give a reason why they should write that again which others have written well, or at least tolerably, before. For those which I am to follow are such as I may rather fear the reproach of coming

into their number than the opinion of presumption if I hope to do better than they."

After Elizabeth had made Bacon Chancellor and Secretary of State, she visited him at Hulford, and said, "This house is too small for a man like you." To which he replied, "Madam, it is your Majesty's fault, for you have made me *too large* for the house."

B. 1564. WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE. D. 1616.

SHAKSPEARE wrote with perhaps the least personal reflection of himself, of all men; and it is difficult to find, from any hint in all his wondrous productions, that he had any expectation, or even desire, to be known by posterity. There are words, however, that he puts in the mouth of the King in "Henry VIII.," which show that he had, at least, some thought about the fame of his heroes after death. They are these: —

> "After my death I wish no other herald,
> No other speaker of my living actions,
> To keep mine honor from corruption,
> But such an honest chronicler as Griffith."

It is claimed that in his Fifty-fifth Sonnet, if anywhere, his ambition for posthumous fame crops out; but this is doubtful. It is all in two lines: —

> "Not marble, not the gilded monuments
> Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme."

Spenser was much more explicit in proclaiming his verse to be an "immortal monument."

Even Shakspeare's plays were rescued from oblivion by others, not by himself, as he appears to have sought neither a revision nor the preservation of any part of his works. He retired to Stratford-upon-Avon with a moderate competence, willed to his wife his "second-best" bed, wholly unmindful of the great legacy he had left to mankind. Hamlet says: —

"Oh heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there 's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year; but, by 'r Lady! he must build churches then, or else shall he suffer not thinking on!"

And Shakspeare puts into the mouth of one of the conspirators against Cæsar these words: —

> "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

He makes Macbeth say, —

> "I have bought
> Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
> Which would be worn now in their newest gloss."

He also makes Macbeth utter the following sorry estimate of human life: —

> "Out, out, brief candle!
> Life 's but a walking shadow; a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more."

B. 1573. **BEN JONSON.** D. 1637.

Ben Jonson, it is said, wrote best when he was drunk; and there is some evidence in his journal that he thought so, when he entered the following: "Memorandum. Upon the 20th of May, the king (Heaven reward him!) sent me £100. At that time I often went to the Devil Tavern; and before I had spent £40 of it, wrote my 'Alchymist.' I laid the plot of my 'Volpone,' and wrote most of it after a present of ten dozen of palmsack from my good Lord T——. That *I am positive will live to posterity*, and be acted, when I and envy be friends, with applause. . . . Memorandum. The first speech in my 'Cattilina,' spoken by Scylla's ghost, was writ after I had parted with my friend at the Devil Tavern: I had drunk well that night, and had *brave notions*. There is one scene in that play which I think flat. I resolve to drink no more water in my wine."

What "rare Ben" said of Francis Beaumont might very well be applied to himself, or that "he loved too much himself and his own verses." He was ever on bad terms with those who did not believe in *O rare Ben Jonson!* Their works were nothing but "beggarly and barren trash," but his were,—

> "The high raptures of a happy Muse,
> Borne on the wings of her immortal thought,
> That kicks at earth with a disdainful heel,
> And beats at Heaven's gate with her bright hoofs."

He also hints in some lines which accompany "The Poetaster," how he would soon demonstrate to the world his scholastic and dramatic abilities, as follows: —

> "Once, I'll say, —
> To strike the ears of Time in these fresh strains
> As shall, beside the cunning of their ground,
> Give cause to some of wonder, some despite,
> And more despair to imitate their sound.
> I, that spend half my nights and all my days
> Here in a cell, to get a dark, pale face,
> To come forth with the ivy and the bays,
> And in this age can hope no better grace, —
> Leave me! There's something come into my thought,
> That must and shall be sung high and aloof,
> Safe from the wolf's black jaw, and the dull ass's hoof."

The "wolf's black jaw" and the "dull ass's hoof" "rare Ben" seems to have thought too good not to be repeated, and so we find it once more in "An Ode to Himself." First he says: —

> "What though the greedy fry
> Be taken with false baits
> Of worded balladry,
> And think it poesy?
> They die with their conceits,
> And only piteous scorn upon their folly waits.
>
> "Then take in hand thy lyre,
> Strike in thy proper strain."

After this the poet, who had earned some bread and much reputation by writing for the stage, gets his "jaw" and "hoof" in again: —

"And since our dainty age
Cannot endure reproof,
Make not thyself a page
To that strumpet the stage;
But sing high and aloof
Safe from the wolf's black jaw
And the dull ass's hoof."

B. 1576. **ROBERT BURTON.** D. 1640.

Burton was said to have hastened the day of his death in order to enjoy the posthumous repute of having in his own epitaph correctly calculated the date of his departure. His "Anatomy of Melancholy" had a large reputation in its day, and no library is complete without it at the present time. Swift, Johnson, and Byron resorted to it for its literary anecdotes and learned quotations.

"Yet thus much I will say of myself," writes Burton, "and that I hope without all suspicion of pride or self-conceit, I have lived a silent, sedentary, solitary, private life, *mihi et musis*, in the University, as long almost as Xenocrates in Athens, *ad senectam ferè*, to learn wisdom as he did, penned up most part in my study, — for I have been brought up a student in the most flourishing college of Europe."

B. 1591. **ROBERT HERRICK.** D. 1674.

It is a pity that decency requires an expurgated edition of an author among whose writings such charming lyrics are to be found as the "Dirge of Jephthah's Daughter;" but Herrick was a contemporary of Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, and yielded, of course, to the prevailing standard of public taste. Being ejected by Cromwell from his church living in 1648, he dropped his title of "Reverend" to assume that of "Esquire," and published a volume to which he gave the title of "Hesperides; or, the Works both Humane and Divine, of Robert Herrick, Esq."

Doubtless the "Esquire" was accepted by the public, as well as by himself, as more appropriate than "Reverend" would have been to the character of the lyrics, some part of which he yet seems rather arrogantly to call "Divine."

But, whether "Reverend" or "Esquire," "His Poetrie his Pillar" uncovers a rank growth of conceit, as the following extracts will show: —

"How many lye forgot
In Vaults beneath?
And piecemeal rot
Without a fame in death?

"Behold this living stone,
I reare for me,
Ne'er to be thrown
Downe, envious Time, by thee.

"Pillars let some set up,
If so they please;
Here is my hope,
And my Pyramides."

B. 1608. JOHN MILTON. D. 1674.

When we remember that Milton obtained only ten pounds for his "Paradise Lost," while Hoyle obtained two hundred for his work on Whist, it is not easy to see any foundation for vanity, even if his song should a "fit audience find, though few," as he expected; but it is very plain that the greatest of English poets was not unconscious of his lofty merits. After saying that he was

"Not sedulous by nature to incite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed,"

he adds,—

"Me of these
Nor skilled, nor studious higher argument
Remains, *sufficient of itself to raise*
That name, unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years damp my intended wing
Depressed, and much they may, if all be mine,
Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear."

When but thirty-three years of age, Milton appears to have had a sublime confidence in his power to produce both prose and verse of exceptional merit, and may have had in his mind some vague idea of his great work in his mother tongue, "Para-

dise Lost," brought forth long after, and when he was wholly bereft of eyesight. "I must say, therefore, that after I had for my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense!) been exercised to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers, both at home and at the schools, it was found that, whether aught was imposed on me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of my own choice in English, or other tongue, *prosing or versing*, but chiefly this latter, *the style*, by certain *vital signs it had, was likely to live.*"

Then, after referring to "encomiums" he had received in Italy, "which the Italian is not forward to bestow upon men of this side of the Alps," he says: "I began thus far to assert both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labor and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, *I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die.*" He was right; the world will "not willingly let it die."

Of his youth he says: "For seven years I studied the learning and arts wont to be taught, far from all vice, and approved of all good men, even till having taken what they call the master's degree, and that with praise."

One more example of his reference to himself may not be amiss: —

> "On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
> In darkness and with dangers compassed round,
> And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
> Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
> Purples the east. Still govern thou my song,
> Urania, and fit audience find, though few."

And again in "Paradise Lost:" —

> "Ofttimes nothing profits more
> Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right,
> Well managed."

B. 1617. **SIR PETER LELY.** D. 1680.

Sir Peter Lely was a portrait-painter of very great merit, but modest when estimating himself. "Sir Peter," said one of the frequenters of the court of Charles II., "how did you get your reputation? You know you are no great painter." "I know I am not," said Lely, calmly, "but I am the best you have."

B. 1621. **LORD SHAFTESBURY.** D. 1683.

When Lord Chancellor Shaftesbury (in the reign of Charles II.) went to sit to the painter Varelst, and was received by him with his hat on, — "Don't you know me?" said the peer. "Yes," replied the

painter, "you are my Lord Chancellor. And do you know me? I am Varelst. The king can make any man Chancellor, but he can make nobody a Varelst." Shaftesbury was disgusted, and employed another painter.

B. 1631. **JOHN DRYDEN.** D. 1700.

DRYDEN, beyond doubt a great and masculine poet, thought his twenty-eight plays superior to Shakspeare's, and that he could improve "The Tempest," as well as Milton's "Paradise Lost." The author of "Absalom and Achitophel" takes a higher seat than a numerous crowd of poets; but the public judgment still places him below those whose works he thought himself able to mend. He thought it better to acknowledge his vanity than to leave the world to do it for him, so he writes: "For what other reason have I spent my life in so unprofitable a study? Why am I grown old in seeking so barren a reward as fame? The same parts and application which have made me a poet might have raised me to any honors of the gown."

He thought his merits greatly undervalued, and declared that he had "few thanks to pay his stars that he was born among Englishmen." In reference to one of his poems, "The Year of Wonders," he says: "I am satisfied that as the Prince and General [Rupert and Monk] are incomparably the best

subjects I have ever had, so what I have written on them is much better than what I have performed on any other. As I have endeavored to adorn my poem with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution."

In the preface to the "Second Miscellany," Dryden says, "I have taken some pains to make it my masterpiece in English."

Swift writes of Dryden: "He has often said to me in confidence, that the world would never have suspected him to be so great a poet, if he had not assured them so frequently in his prefaces, that it was impossible they could either doubt or forget it."

Dryden's great-grandfather is reported to have made this self-confident statement in his will, that he was "assured by the Holy Ghost that he was the elect of God;" which would seem to indicate the heredity of the poet's self-appreciation.

Of one of his tragedies he wrote: "I dare *promise* for this play, that in the roughness of the numbers, which was so designed, you will see somewhat more masterly than any of my former tragedies."

Of his "Ode to Saint Cecilia's Day" he said, almost justifiably, "A nobler ode never was produced nor ever will be."

RICHARD BRATHWAYTE.

"Ri Brathwayte, Esq.," — as he styles himself, — dedicated to the Earl of Worcester, in 1635, his translation of "The Arcadian Princesse: or the triumph of Jvstice Priscribing excellent rules of Physick, for a sick Justice, digested into fowre bookes and faithfully rendered to the originall Italian copy."

Some words from the dedication to the Earl may illustrate the style of early times, and also of the translator's estimate of himself: —

"You shall here meet with an Author walking in an un-beat path. One who discurtains the vices of that time so smoothly, though smartly, as his continued Allegorie pleads his apologie. A right Italian wit shal your honor find him, quick and spritely, and of eminent race and ranke in his country. . . . Now if this new dresse doe not become him, all that I can say in mine owne defence is this, and no other; there is great difference betwixt Taylor and Translator: sure I am, that the loom is the same, if not the lustre; the stuffe the same, though not the colour."

B. 1648. SIR GODFREY KNELLER. D. 1723.

Sir Godfrey Kneller, who painted the female beauties at Hampton Court in the time of Charles II., to the great disgust of all those not included, was a good artist as well as a wit, but prodigiously vain.

He was greatly flattered by the poets; and Pope laid a wager there was no flattery so gross that his friend would not swallow. To prove it, Pope said to him one day as he was painting, "Sir Godfrey, I believe if God Almighty had had your assistance the world would have been formed more perfect." "'Fore God, sir," replied Kneller, "I believe so." In the same impious strain he said to a low fellow whom he overheard cursing himself, "God damn you! God may damn the Duke of Marlborough, and perhaps Sir Godfrey Kneller; but do you think he will take the trouble of damning such a scoundrel as you?"

At another time Pope was with Sir Godfrey, both physically very inferior men, when Sir Godfrey's nephew, a Guinea trader, came in. "Nephew," said Sir Godfrey, "you have the honor of seeing the two greatest men in the world." "I don't know how great you may be," said the Guinea trader, "but I don't like your looks: I have often bought a man much better than both of you together, all muscles and bones, for ten guineas."

His vanity was perhaps equally conspicuous, though not without a basis of truth, when he refused to take the son of his tailor as an apprentice. "Dost thou think, man, *I* can make thy son a painter? No! God Almighty only makes painters."

The French, however, furnish some parallel cases of conceit quite in keeping with that of Sir Godfrey. Madame de la Meilleraye, a cousin of Cardinal Richelieu, speaks of the Chevalier de Savoie, a man of

high birth but most dissolute habits, who, having been rebuked, said, "Depend upon it, God will think twice before damning a gentleman of my quality." The Duc de Clermont-Sonnerre is also reported to have said in speaking of himself, "God will never dare to damn a duke and peer."

B. 1650. JOHN CHURCHILL. D. 1722.
(Duke of Marlborough.)

MARLBOROUGH, when from his eyes "the streams of dotage" began to flow, exclaimed, as he passed before a mirror, "That was once a man."

B. 1667. JONATHAN SWIFT. D. 1745.

IN one of his letters to Bolingbroke, Swift writes:

"All my endeavors to distinguish myself were only for want of a great title and fortune, that I might be used like a lord by those who have an opinion of my parts; whether right or wrong is no great matter. And so the reputation of wit and great learning does the office of a blue ribbon or coach and six."

After he became, as Johnson writes, "a driveller and a show," laying his hand one day upon the "Tale of a Tub," he closed it with a deep whisper, "What a genius I had when I wrote that book!"

Swift had thrice requested Pope to inscribe to him one of those Epistles by which the poet conferred

honor and immortality on his friends. On the 3d of September, 1735, he again wrote to him as follows: "I have the ambition, and it is very earnest, as well as in haste, to have one Epistle inscribed to me while I am alive, and you just in the time when wit and wisdom are in the height; I must once more repeat Cicero's desire to a friend: *Orna me.*"

B. 1674. **ISAAC WATTS.** D. 1748.

This author and reverend poet, distinguished by his "Hymns and Spiritual Songs" wherever the English language is known, does not appear to exalt himself, or to give much prominence to his own existence, though perhaps according a trifle less to that of the rest of mankind. This is what he says: —

"There are a number of us creep
Into this world, to eat and sleep;
And know no reason why we 're born,
But only to consume the corn,
Devour the cattle, fowl, and fish,
And leave behind an empty dish.
The crows and ravens do the same,
Unlucky birds of hateful name;
Ravens or crows might fill their places,
And swallow corn or carcasses,
Then it their tombstones, when they die,
Be n't taught to flatter and to lie,
There 's nothing better will be said
Than that they 've eat up all their bread,
Drunk up their drink, and gone to bed."

B. 1684. **EDWARD YOUNG.** D. 1766.

"And what so foolish as the chase of Fame?
How vain the prize, how impotent our aim!
For what are men who grasp at praise sublime,
But bubbles on the rapid stream of Time,
That rise and fall, and swell, and are no more,
Born and forgot, ten thousand in an hour?
Should this verse live, O Lumley! may it be
A monument of gratitude to thee:
Whose early favor I must own with shame,
So long my patron, and so late my theme."

And yet we find in the same poem the following words: —

"The love of praise, howe'er concealed by art,
Reigns more or less, and glows in every heart."

B. 1688. **ALEXANDER POPE.** D. 1744.

Perhaps no poet was ever more anxious to perpetuate his fame than Pope; and he began early and worked late.

"While still a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

The complacency with which Pope accepted the admiration of his friends is very fine and sweet: —

"But why then publish? Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write,

Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise,
And Congreve loved, and Swift endured my lays :
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield, read,
Even mitred Rochester would nod the head;
And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend before)
Received with open arms one poet more.
Happy my studies, if by these approved !
Happier their author, if by these beloved !
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from Burnet's, Oldmixon's, and Cook's."

After Pope had published his "Essay on Man," angling for a compliment, he asked his friend Mallet, what new things there were in literature, and was answered, "Nothing worth notice; only a thing called an 'Essay on Man,' made up of shocking poetry and insufferable philosophy." "I wrote it!" cried Pope, stung with rage; and his friend blushed, bowed, and darted out of the room, never to return.

B. 1697. **WILLIAM HOGARTH.** D. 1764.

HOGARTH'S reputation rests mainly on his success as a satirist, or comic painter; but he thought very highly of his portraits, and boasted that "he could paint equal to Vandyck, give him his time and let him choose his subject." This only places him in the same category with Milton, who esteemed "Paradise Regained" superior to "Paradise Lost." But does not the owner of a pair of horses often most praise the poorest one? The weakest child is most caressed by the mother.

B. 1697. **RICHARD SAVAGE.** D. 1743.

In Dr. Johnson's remarkable "Life of Savage," he observes: "Vanity, the most innocent species of pride, was most frequently predominant: he could not easily leave off when he had once begun to mention himself or his works; nor ever read his verses without stealing his eyes from the page, to discover in the faces of his audience how they were affected with any favorite passage."

B. 1703. **JOHN WESLEY.** D. 1791.

This distinguished preacher published anonymously his Dictionary, — after Bailey, and prior to Johnson, — the title to which was, "The complete English Dictionary, explaining most of the hard words which are found in the best English writers, By a lover of good English and Common Sense."

It was a very modest duodecimo of one hundred pages only, and yet Mr. Wesley speaks of it in rather a large way. "The author assures you," so he writes, "he thinks this is the best dictionary in the world." Then he adds, "Many are the mistakes in all other English dictionaries which I have yet seen, whereas I can truly say I know of none in this."

B. 1707. **HENRY FIELDING.** D. 1754.

In that celebrated romance of "Tom Jones," Fielding gives forth this sentiment: "Come, bright love of fame, fill my ravished fancy with the hopes of charming ages yet to come! Foretell me that some tender maid, whose grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth which existed in my Charlotte, shall from her sympathetic breast send forth the heaving sigh! Do thou teach me not only to foresee, but to enjoy, nay, even to feed on future praise! Comfort me by the solemn assurance that, when the little parlor in which I sit at this moment shall be reduced to a worse furnished box, I shall be read with honor by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall never know nor see!"

B. 1708. **LORD CHATHAM.** D. 1778.

The Great Commoner, Pitt, afterwards less great as Lord Chatham, was not devoid of confidence in himself. He said to the Duke of Devonshire in 1757, "I am sure that I can save this country, and that nobody else can;" and this proved to be true.

In 1770 Lord Chatham pretty roughly commented upon Burke's pamphlet, "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents;" and more than twenty years after (1792), Burke refers to Chatham as "that

grand artifice of fraud," and exclaims, "Alas! alas! how different the real from the ostensible man! Must all this theatrical stuffing and raised heels be necessary for the character of a great man?"

"Impossible!—it is not good French," said Napoleon. When Lord Anson of the Admiralty sent word to Chatham, who was suffering from a sharp attack of the gout, that his order to fit out the naval expedition within the time he had specified would be impossible, he exclaimed, "Who talks to me of impossibility?" Then rising to his feet, in spite of the increased agony of his sufferings, he added, "Tell Lord Anson that he serves under a minister who treads on impossibilities."

B. 1709. **DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.** D. 1784.

A GENTLEMAN once observed to Dr. Johnson that he excelled his competitors in writing biography. "Sir," was the complacent reply, "I believe that is true. The dogs don't know how to write trifles with dignity."

On another occasion he said: "My other works are wine and water; but my 'Rambler' is pure wine." The world, however, does not agree with this estimate, any more than with Milton about the merits of "Paradise Regained."

Johnson, in the last year of his life, was one evening in fine spirits at the "Essex Head" Club, and

called out with a sudden air of exultation, "Oh, gentlemen, I must tell you a very great thing. The Empress of Russia has ordered the 'Rambler' to be translated into the Russian language; so I shall be read on the banks of the Wolga. Horace boasts that his fame would extend as far as the banks of the Rhone: now the Wolga is farther from me than the Rhone was from Horace."

Speaking of his own "London," the copyright of which noble poem he sold for ten guineas, he said that he might perhaps have been content with less; "but Paul Whitehead had a little before got ten guineas for a poem, and I would not take less than Paul Whitehead."

In the year 1775 Sir Joshua Reynolds painted the portrait of Johnson, in which he was represented as reading, and near-sighted. The expression of this peculiarity so much displeased the Doctor that he remarked, "It is not friendly to hand down to posterity the imperfections of any man." Alluding to this picture, Mrs. Thrale says, "I observed that he would not be known by posterity for his defects only, let Sir Joshua do his worst;" and then referred to Reynolds's own portrait (painted for Mrs. Thrale), where he had introduced the ear-trumpet. To which the Doctor answered, "He may paint himself as deaf as he chooses, but I will not be blinking Sam."

A lady of Johnson's acquaintance once asked him how it happened that he was never invited to dine at the tables of the great; to which he replied, "Be-

cause, madam, great lords and ladies do not like to have their mouths stopped."

The manners of Johnson sufficiently explain the following incident: James Boswell, expatiating to his father, Lord Auchinleck, on the learning and other qualities of Dr. Johnson, concluded, "He is the grand luminary in our hemisphere, — quite a constellation, sir." "Ursa Major, I suppose," dryly responded the judge.

The hold that Johnson has on the esteem of mankind, after the lapse of a century, proves that he was no unreal giant, but a hater of shams, and ever striving after the eternal verities, although unquestionably indebted to Boswell for his highest fame. He could not endure undeserved praise, and knew well enough that his tragedy of "Irene" added neither to his literary fame nor to the sum of his real merits. When a gentleman by the name of Pot was reported as having said that it "was the finest tragedy of modern times," Johnson at once replied, "If Pot says so, Pot lies;" and that verdict the public has never reversed. Goldsmith really touched Johnson in his most vulnerable point when he said, "He makes his little fishes talk like whales."

He seems often to have had grim humor in his own stilted phraseology, but evidently was not pleased with that style when exhibited by others. A pompous inscription is called by him, in his "Life of Cowley," an epitaph to let, occupied indeed, but scarcely appropriated.

In the "Rambler," Johnson writes of fame, which, he says, "no man, however high or mean, however wise or ignorant, was yet able to despise."

When Johnson's "Irene" was brought on the stage, he laid aside his plain garb and showed himself in a scarlet waistcoat with rich gold-lace, and a gold-laced hat, "from a fancy that, as a dramatic author, his dress should be more gay than what he ordinarily wore." He has many just sentences, like these: "The utmost which we can reasonably hope or fear, is to fill a vacant hour with prattle and be forgotten." "Names which hoped to range over kingdoms and continents, shrink at last into cloisters or colleges."

The ponderous style of Johnson has often been lampooned, and a Highland student was bold enough to ridicule his dictionary. "What is a window?" propounded the facetious querist. Johnson was supposed to reply, "A window, sir, is an orifice cut out of an edifice for the introduction of illumination." "And how should one ask a friend to snuff the candle?" "Sir, you ought to say, deprive that luminary of its superfluous eminence."

Hannah More besought Boswell to mitigate, in his life of Dr. Johnson, some of his asperities. He roughly answered, "He would not cut off his claws, nor make a tiger a cat to please anybody."

B. 1711. **DAVID HUME.** D. 1776.

HUME, whose education was mainly self-acquired from books, early set his affections on literary distinction; and his style of writing, as exhibited in his Essays and his History, is nearly faultless. His ruling passion was, —

> "What shall I do to be forever known,
> And make the age to come mine own?"

After he was elected to a librarianship in Edinburgh, he appeared much elated with the glory of his success; and to his friend Dr. Clephane, to whom he had recently sent a copy of his "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding," writes a letter, from which the following extract is taken: —

"I cast a favorable regard on you, and earnestly desire your friendship and good-will; a little flattery, too, from so eminent a hand would be very acceptable to me. You know you are somewhat in my debt in that particular. The present I made you of my Inquiry was calculated both as a mark of my regard and as a snare to catch a little incense from you. Why do you put me to the necessity of giving it to myself?"

In his Autobiography Hume observes: "It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore I shall be short. It may be an instance of vanity that I pretend at all to write my

Life. The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity."

Then, after giving credit to several points in his character and no more than he was entitled to, he adds, "I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one."

Dr. Adam Smith relates how Hume diverted himself, a short time before his death, by inventing jocular excuses he might make to Charon, and Charon's surly answers in return. "I thought I might say to him, 'Good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition; allow me a little time to see how the public receive the alterations.' But Charon would answer, 'Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue!'"

B. 1713. **LAURENCE STERNE.** D. 1768.

Laurence Sterne, the Beecher of his day, discloses too much of his own character in his "Sentimental Journey;" but his egotism is even more offensive in some of his letters to the wife of Daniel Draper, Esq., then in England, while her husband was in India. He writes to her over the signature of "The Bramin," much like a rogue, and eagerly proclaims himself a wit. He writes: "And indeed I begin to think you have as many virtues as my Uncle Toby's widow. Talking of widows, — pray, Eliza, if you ever are

such, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy nabob, because I design to marry you myself. My wife cannot live long, and I know not the woman I should so well like for her substitute as yourself. 'T is true I am ninety-five in constitution, and you but twenty-five; but what I want in youth I will make up in wit and good humor. Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Sacharissa. Tell me in answer to this that you approve and honor the proposal."

And this wretched old fool was the next day writing a love-letter to Lady P——, and complaining that she had made him miserable!

B. 1723. **SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.** D. 1792.

Sir Joshua Reynolds was not accounted a vain man, and yet he is reported to have purchased a very odd and showy carriage soon after he took his house in Leicester Fields, and requested his sister to ride about in it, in order that people might ask whose it was, when the answer would be, "It belongs to the great painter."

To a gentleman who had remarked, "Reynolds's tints are admirable, but his colors fly," Reynolds, overhearing him, said, "I thank you, sir, for bringing me off with flying colors."

B. 1728. **OLIVER GOLDSMITH.** D. 1774.

GOLDSMITH is perhaps most loved as an author, by the English-speaking race, of all those who flourished in his day. Certainly he wrote "no line which, dying, he could wish to blot;" and it seems almost cruel to perpetuate any of his deficiencies or excesses. His "Vicar of Wakefield" and most of his poetical works have long been accepted as no mean part among English classics; but in relation to his work on Natural History, his excellent friend Dr. Johnson observed: "Goldsmith, sir, will give us a fine book upon the subject; but if he can distinguish a cow from a horse, that I believe may be the extent of his knowledge of natural history." On the whole, the work was a creditable compilation, though he told us that "the cow sheds her horns [1] every two years."

He was jealous of beauty even in the other sex. When the people of Amsterdam gathered round the balcony to look at the Miss Hornecks, he grew impatient, and said peevishly, "There are places where I also am admired." [2]

[1] Swift was guilty of a similar blunder in the "Voyage to the Land of Houyhnhnms," where he states that all animals reject the use of salt but man; whereas many of the herbivorous animals are more fond of it than man himself. And Jeremy Taylor, in spite of his wonderful genius and eloquence, was also very slipshod and uncritical as to his facts, if they only served his purpose. He not only accepts of a monument "nine furlongs high," erected by Ninus, but he tells us "When men sell a mule, they speak of the horse that begat him, not of the ass that bore him."

[2] This is a story of Boswell, who was certainly jealous of Goldsmith, and it may not have been well founded, or said only as a jest.

Goldsmith often tried to shine in conversation, but always stumbled; and the contrast between his published works and what he spoke was such that Horace Walpole called him an "inspired idiot;" and Garrick said, "Noll wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll." In defiance of his own senses, he obstinately maintained, even angrily, says Macaulay, that he chewed his dinner by moving his upper jaw.

After Goldsmith's "Traveller" appeared, his fame suddenly grew, and his society began to be courted. It is not strange that unusual attentions fed his conceit. The story of the terms of Goldsmith's answer to a dinner invitation which had been given to him used to be frequently repeated by envious rivals. "I would with pleasure accept your kind invitation; but to tell you the truth, my dear boy, my 'Traveller' has found me a home in so many places that I am engaged, I believe, three days. Let me see: to-day I dine with Edmund Burke, to-morrow with Dr. Nugent, and the next day with Topham Beauclerc; but I'll tell you what *I'll do for you:* I'll dine with you on Saturday."

No doubt "my dear boy" felt grateful to be *done for* in that way.

Dr. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends,—as, Boswell, Bozzy; Goldsmith, Goldy,—with which Goldsmith was not pleased. When told that Johnson had said, "We are all in labor for a name to Goldy's play," he muttered, "I have often desired him not to call me Goldy."

In a circle of wits one evening he found fault with some one for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honor of unquestionable superiority. "Sir," said Goldsmith, "you are making a monarchy of what should be a republic."

In a letter to Reynolds, while on a visit at Paris, he says: "I wish I could send you some amusement in this letter; but I protest I am so stupefied by the air of this country (*for I am sure it can never be natural*) that I have not a word to say."

At a meeting of the London Literary Club, Langton mentioned with commendation some recent work of a favorite author. Goldsmith, with characteristic jealous vanity, blurts out, "Here's such a stir about a fellow that has written one book, and I have written many." "Ah! Doctor," says Johnson, "two and forty sixpences, you know, to one guinea." It was thus they constantly poked fun at poor Goldy; but he got in a blow on Johnson's "Rasselas," where all the uncultured and humblest characters were made to appear in the stately tread of Johnson's pompous phraseology, when he said, "The little fishes speak like whales, and the women are all Johnsons in petticoats."

Mr. R. G. White says, "When Goldsmith, jealous of the attention which a dancing monkey attracted in a coffee-house, said, 'I can do that as well,' and was about to attempt it, he was but playing Bottom."

Boswell, undoubtedly disposed to underrate Goldsmith, relates that "at the exhibition of the Fantoc-

cini in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he [Goldsmith] could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, 'Pshaw! I can do it better myself.'"

Dr. Johnson said Goldsmith once complained to him, in ludicrous terms of distress, "Whenever I write anything, the public make a point to know nothing about it."

B. 1728. **DR. JOHN HUNTER.** D. 1792.

WIDELY known for his anatomical works and his Museum of Natural History, Dr. Hunter appears to have had a full sense of his merits when he said: "It will be a long time before this world sees another John Hunter."

B. 1730. **EDMUND BURKE.** D. 1797.

THE appearance of Mr. Burke's book of "Reflections on the Revolution in France" severed his relations from Mr. Fox and the Whig party, and caused the retirement of the greatest man of his age from Parliament. He defended himself with great vigor and with some sarcasm, but always with studied modesty. The following is a specimen from his "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs:" —

"The gentlemen who, in the name of the party, have passed sentence on Mr. Burke's book in the light of literary criticism, are judges above all challenge. He did not indeed flatter himself that, as a writer, he could claim the approbation of men whose talents, in his judgment and in the public judgment, approach to prodigies, if ever such persons should be disposed to estimate the merit of a composition upon the standard of their own ability.

"In their critical censure, though Mr. Burke may find himself humbled by it as a writer, as a man and as an Englishman he finds matter not only of consolation, but of pride."

In 1780 Mr. Burke appeared before his constituents at Bristol as a candidate for re-election to Parliament, and in answer to charges against his previous conduct in defence mainly of the American Colonies, which had been sharply assailed, he made a modest and yet a very manly speech, recanting nothing, and among other things said: —

"Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you for having set me in a place wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had any share in any measure giving quiet to private property and to private conscience; if by my vote I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen,

and taught him to look for protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the good-will of his countrymen, — if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions, I can shut the book. I might wish to read a page or two more; but this is enough for my measure. I have not lived in vain."

A few days after this speech he appeared at the polls and declined the election, saying: "I have not canvassed the whole of this city in form; but I have taken such a view of it as satisfies my own mind that your choice will not ultimately fall upon me."

Towards the close of this brief speech, not hiding a proper estimate of himself, he observed: "From the bottom of my heart I thank you for what you have done for me. You have given me a long term, which is now expired. I have performed the conditions, and enjoyed all the profits to the full; and I now surrender your estate into your hands without being in a single tile or single stone impaired or wasted by me. I have served the public for fifteen years; I have served you in particular for six. What is past is well stored. It is safe and out of the power of fortune.

"I confided perhaps too much in my intentions. They were really fair and upright; and I am bold to say that I ask no ill thing for you, when on parting from this place I pray that whomever you choose to succeed me, he may resemble me exactly in all things except my abilities to serve and my fortune to please you."

Mr. Burke, perhaps the most eminent of British statesmen, was, however, again elected to Parliament, from the borough of Malton, serving with great distinction fourteen years longer, and retired forever from the House of Commons, June 20, 1794.

Single-speech Hamilton once had Burke for his private secretary, and afterwards twitted him of being taken from a garret. "In that way," proudly retorted Burke, "I let myself down to you."

B. 1731. **WILLIAM COWPER.** D. 1800.

COWPER'S first volume of poetry appeared in 1782, and sold very slowly. Some of the journals and reviews of the day did not speak well of the author, and others kept silence. There was one, the "Monthly Review," whose verdict the poet much desired to obtain, as it was the most widely circulated literary periodical of the day. Cowper, therefore, wrote to a friend, June 12, 1782: —

"What will that critical Rhadamanthus say when my shivering form shall appear before him? Still he keeps me in hot water, and I must wait another month for his award. Alas! when I wish for a favorable sentence from that quarter (to confess my weakness that I should not confess to all), I feel myself not a little influenced by a tender regard to my reputation here, even among my neighbors at Olney. Here are watchmakers who themselves are

wits, and who at present perhaps think me one. Here is a carpenter and a baker, and, not to mention others, here is your idol Mr. Teedon, whose smile is fame. All these read the 'Monthly Review,' and all these will set me down for a dunce if those terrible critics show them the example. But oh, whereever else I am accounted dull, dear Mr. Griffith, let me pass for a genius at Olney!" Soon after, "John Gilpin" and then "The Task" appeared; and Cowper everywhere since has not failed to "pass for a genius."

B. 1737. **EDWARD GIBBON.** D. 1794.

In his "Autobiography," Gibbon says: —

"The old reproach, that no British altars had been raised to the Muse of History, was recently disproved by the first performances of Robertson and Hume, the histories of Scotland and of the Stuarts. I will assume the presumption of saying that I was not unworthy to read them; nor will I disguise my different feelings in the repeated perusals. The perfect composition, the nervous language, the well-turned periods of Dr. Robertson inflamed me to the ambitious hope that I might one day tread in his footsteps; the calm philosophy, the careless, inimitable beauties of his friend and rival, often forced me to close the volume with a mixed sensation of delight and despair.

"Yet, upon the whole, the 'History of the Decline and Fall' seems to have struck root, both at home and abroad, and may perhaps a hundred years hence still continue to be abused.

"I am at a loss how to describe the success of the work without betraying the vanity of the writer. The first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and the bookseller's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin. My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by taste or fashion of the day; nor was the general voice disturbed by the barking of any profane critic. If I listened to the music of praise, I was more seriously satisfied with the approbation of my judges. The candor of Dr. Robertson embraced his disciple. A letter from Mr. Hume overpaid the labor of ten years; but I have never presumed to accept a place in the triumvirate of British historians."

When he had completed his great work at Lausanne he took a walk by moonlight, in the silent midnight, and reflected upon the idea that he had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and writes that, "Whatsoever may be the future date of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious. I will add two facts which have seldom occurred in the composition of six or even five quartos: —

"1. My first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press.

"2. Not a sheet has been seen by any human eyes, excepting those of the author and the printer: the faults and the merits are exclusively my own.

"When I contemplate the common lot of mortality, I must acknowledge that I have drawn a high prize in the lottery of life."

Gibbon happened to be present when Sheridan made his great speech in Westminster Hall at the trial of Warren Hastings; and the orator, noticing his presence, adroitly brought his name into the speech, saying: —

"The facts that made up the volume of narrative were unparalleled in atrociousness; and that nothing equal in criminality was to be traced, either in ancient or modern history, in the correct periods of Tacitus or the luminous[1] page of Gibbon."

It is needless to say that Gibbon was more than pleased, and he does not fail to record the compliment: "It is not my province to absolve or condemn the Governor of India; but Mr. Sheridan's eloquence demanded my applause; nor could I hear without emotion the personal compliment which he paid me in the presence of the British nation."

In his "Autobiography," Gibbon declares: "I can derive from my ancestors neither glory nor shame. Yet a sincere and simple narrative of my own life may amuse my leisure hours; but it will subject

[1] This was in June, 1788; and after he had finished, one of his friends reproached him with flattering Gibbon. "Why, what did I say of him?" asked Sheridan. "You called him the luminous author." "Luminous! Oh! I meant *voluminous*."

me, and perhaps with justice, to the imputation of vanity."

After making references to the lives of the Younger Pliny, Petrarch, and Erasmus, to the Essays of Montaigne and to Sir William Temple, to the "Confessions" of Rousseau and other notable memoirs, he concludes thus: "That I am equal or superior to some of these, the effects of modesty or affectation cannot force me to dissemble."

Gibbon did not follow the exhortations of his mother, — for whom he had no great fondness, never having had the pleasures of boyhood in a fond mother's affections, — and therefore did not take up the study of the law. He says of himself: "Nature had not endowed me with the bold and ready eloquence which makes itself heard amidst the tumult of the bar; and I should probably have been diverted from the labors of literature, without acquiring the fame or fortune of a successful pleader."

While he was a member of the House of Commons he never spoke, and his career was undistinguished save that he was one of Lord North's "faithful and silent band." He was a Tory during the American Revolution, and by his votes and pen supported the policy of his Government. He wrote to a friend years after: "You have not forgotten that I entered Parliament *without patriotism*, *without ambition*, and that all my views were limited to the convenient and honest place of Lord of Trade." This place he held for three years, from 1779 to 1782, with an annual salary

of £750, which was certainly more respectable than the sum of either his patriotism or his ambition.

B. 1737. **JOHN WILKES.** D. 1797.

Wilkes, commonly called Jack Wilkes, made himself notorious by No. XLV. of the "North Briton," published by him while an Alderman of London, in 1763, which, by order of both Houses of Parliament, was publicly burned by the common hangman. His paper warfare against Lord Bute deprived him of liberty, and exposed him to two duels. He was elected to the House of Commons — from which he had been expelled and outlawed four times — for the fifth time in 1774. Though his character was infamous, he represented for the time the freedom of the press, to be put down neither by Court nor Parliament, and finally obtained £4,000 damages for the illegal seizure of his papers. His audacity and brilliant wit seem to have won the confidence of Junius, his great contemporary.

The print of John Wilkes, by Hogarth, was called a compound caricature, or a caricature of what Nature had already caricatured, and is said to have been viewed by him with indifference, he jocosely declaring to his friends that it grew every day into a stronger likeness. He was little concerned about his soul, as he said he was "only tenant for life," and the best apology for his person was that he did not make it himself.

I find recorded the following words of this once notorious character. A friend requested him to sit to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and have his portrait placed in Guildhall, as he was then so popular in London that the Court of Aldermen would willingly have paid the expense. "No," said he, "no; they shall never have a delineation of my face that will carry to posterity so damning a proof of what it was. Who knows but a time may come when some future Horace Walpole will treat the world with another quarto volume of historic doubts, in which he may prove that the numerous squinting portraits on tobacco-papers and halfpenny ballads, inscribed with the name of John Wilkes, are 'a weak invention of the enemy;' for that I was not only unlike them, but, if any inference can be drawn from the partiality of the fair sex, the handsomest man of the age I lived in."

SIR PHILIP FRANCIS (JUNIUS).

B. 1740. D. 1818.

"WITHOUT intending an indecent comparison," said Junius, "I may express my opinion that the Bible and Junius will be read when the commentaries of the Jesuits are forgotten."

In the dedication of his celebrated "Letters to the English Nation," a similar idea is more elaborately repeated, as follows:—

"When kings and ministers are forgotten, when force and direction of personal satire is no longer

understood, and when measures are only felt in their remotest consequences, this book will, I believe, be found to contain principles worthy to be transmitted to posterity. . . . This is not the language of vanity. If I am a vain man, my gratification lies within a narrow circle. I am the sole depositary of my own secret, and it shall perish with me."

But the secret has not perished. The world has long conceded the authorship to Sir Philip Francis, and there is less dispute about it now, notwithstanding former controversies, than about the authorship of Homer or of Shakspeare.

B. 1750. **THOMAS ERSKINE.** D. 1823.

Dr. Parr and Erskine were equally vain and conceited, — though the merits of the first as a writer, the last as a speaker, cannot be denied, — and when they met they paid each other most extravagant compliments. On one of these occasions Dr. Parr promised that he would write Erskine's epitaph; to which Erskine replied, that such an intention on the Doctor's part was almost a temptation to commit suicide.

As the youngest son of the Earl of Buchan, Erskine started in life with very limited means, and used to say he lived on "cow-heel beef and tripe." He was even grateful for occasional free admissions to Covent Garden. To his friends he would boastingly exclaim,

"Thank fortune, out of my own family I don't know a lord!"

From his first appearance in court, however, he never lacked retainers. Riding on the Home Circuit with his friend William Adam, he exclaimed after a long silence, "Willie, the time will come when I shall be invested with the robes of Lord Chancellor, and the Star of the Thistle shall blaze on my bosom."

Erskine was a man of undoubted genius, and yet was a great spendthrift of the personal pronoun, so much so that Cobbett, who was printing one of his speeches, stopped in the middle, stating that the remainder would be published when they got a new font with sufficient I's, and that it was proposed Erskine should take "the title of Baron Ego of Eye, in the county of Suffolk."

His elder and penurious brother, the Earl of Buchan, showed his relationship, if not in brotherly assistance, at least in the family inheritance of personal vanity. The Earl often used to observe, "According to Bacon, 'great men have no continuance,' and in the present generation there are three examples of it, — Frederick of Prussia, George Washington, and myself." To an English nobleman who visited him, he said, "My brothers Harry and Tom are certainly extraordinary men; but they owe everything to me." This occasioning some surprise, he continued: "Yes, it is true; they owe everything to me. On my father's death they pressed me for a small annual allowance. I knew that this would have been their ruin, by relaxing

their industry. So, making a sacrifice of my inclination to gratify them, I refused to give them a farthing; and they have both thriven ever since, — owing everything to me."

Canning, in one of his witty publications, gave a caricature of a peroration by Mr. Erskine at a reported meeting of the Friends of Freedom, which at the time was greatly relished; and as it illustrates the egotism generally attributed to a really very able man, the extract which follows may be acceptable:

"He had been a soldier and a sailor, and had a son at Winchester School; he had been called by special retainers during the summer into many different and distant parts of the country, travelling chiefly in post-chaises; he felt himself called upon to declare that his poor faculties were at the service of his country, — of the free and enlightened part of it, at least. He stood here as a man; he stood in the eye, indeed in the hand of God, — to whom (in the presence of the company and waiters) he solemnly appealed; he was of noble, perhaps royal blood; he had a house at Hampstead; was convinced of the necessity of a thorough and radical reform; he loved the Constitution, to which he would cling and grapple."

B. 1751. **RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.** D. 1816.

It must be borne in mind that profanity one hundred years ago was far from being held at its true value, or, as it is now held, not only the wickedest, but the most vulgar and indecent kind of slang; and when Sheridan failed in his first speech, he exclaimed, "I have it in me, and, by God! it shall come out."

B. 1752. **THOMAS CHATTERTON.** D. 1770.

The boy-poet, Chatterton, for whose untimely fate the world still grieves, begged of a painter to paint him "an angel with wings and a trumpet, to trumpet his name over the world."

It is almost certain that he committed suicide rather than to beg. He had seasons of gayety, and, when he wrote to his mother or sister, strove to impress them with his growing importance. On the 20th of July, 1770, he wrote: "Almost all the next Town and County Magazine is mine. I have universal acquaintance; my company is courted everywhere, and, could I humble myself into a comptor, I could have had twenty places before now: but I must be among the great; State matters suit me better than commercial. The ladies are not out of my acquaintance."

Having contracted a sudden acquaintance at Drury Lane Theatre, he says: "Hearing I could write, he desired me to write a few songs for him; this I did the same night, and conveyed them to him the next morning. These he showed to a Doctor of Music, and I am invited to treat with this Doctor, on the footing of a composer, for Ranelagh and the Gardens. Bravo! hey, boys! up we go!"

B. 1759. **RICHARD PORSON.** D. 1808.

SOME angry person having said to the learned Porson, "My opinion of you is most contemptible," he answered, "I never knew an opinion of yours that was not contemptible."

B. 1759. **ROBERT BURNS.** D. 1796.

BURNS, not without reason, thought his noble ode, "Bruce's Address to his Troops at Bannockburn," to be in his "best manner," and so thought Mrs. Dunlop, who belonged to the Wallace family. One of the finest letters of Burns to this lady discloses how sweet to the poet was her praise. Woman's praise is always sweet. He writes: —

"I am truly sorry I was not at home yesterday, when I was so much honored with your order for my copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you are pleased to pay my poetic abilities. I

am fully persuaded that there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the titillations of applause as the sons of Parnassus; nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor bard dances with rapture when those whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges honor him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-chord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the savior of his country."

In writing to "Clarinda," in 1793, he complains about a "dry, distant" letter received from one who, as he says, "*can* write a friendly letter, which would do equal honor to his head and heart, as a whole sheaf of his letters I have by me will witness; and though Fame does not blow her trumpet at my approach *now* as she did *then*, when he first honored me with his friendship, yet I am as proud as ever; and when I am laid in my grave, I wish to be stretched at my full length, that I may occupy every inch of ground which I have a right to."

B. 1756. **WILLIAM GODWIN.** D. 1836.

Godwin was affronted with Charles Lamb because he told him his book about sepulchres was better than Hervey, but not so good as Sir Thomas Browne.

B. 1758. **LORD NELSON.** D. 1805.

ENGLAND'S greatest naval hero was not deficient in self-assertion. In our own country we can hardly conceive that a scarcity of bread was ever a possibility; but in the year 1800 the price of a quartern loaf of bread in England rose to one shilling and tenpence halfpenny; and it became the fashion to give dinners where the guests were asked to bring their own bread. To one of these Nelson was invited, perhaps without notice of such a condition. At any rate, when he found himself without bread, he called his servant, and before the whole company gave him a shilling, and ordered him to go and buy a roll, saying aloud, "It is hard that after fighting my country's battles, I should be grudged her bread." The feelings of the host may be imagined.

It may not be generally known that Nelson's last signal was not "England," but "*Nelson*, expects every man to do his duty." It has been asserted that the officer to whom the order was given affected to have misunderstood the egotistical direction, and substituted the sounding rhetoric which was then and has been ever since received with so much enthusiasm by Englishmen.

B. 1759. **WILLIAM PITT.** D. 1806.

In August, 1776, when the world was agitated by the news that Mr. Pitt, the Great Commoner, had become Earl of Chatham, his son, Little William, exclaimed, "I am glad that I am not the eldest son. I want to speak in the House of Commons like papa."

B. 1762. **GEORGE IV.** D. 1830.

George the Fourth was dissolute, and false in all things, and having nothing upon which even personal vanity could be truthfully supported, he strangely claimed to have been present at the Battle of Waterloo. This claim often taxed the politeness of the Duke of Wellington, who could only say in reply to his recollections, "I have often heard your Majesty say so."

B. 1762. **WILLIAM COBBETT.** D. 1835.

The author of "Peter Porcupine," the "Weekly Political Register," and the "Twopenny Trash," with many other works, was a burly and potent demagogue, suffering two years of imprisonment for his indiscretions; but as an English writer and controversialist he was distinguished by the singular force and simplicity of his style; and yet he made no impression in Parliament when he entered, and soon after died,

having passed the age of seventy. In one of his best works, "Rural Rides," he does not conceal his knowledge of his own importance when he says, "I wish to see many people and to talk to them, and there are a great many people who wish to see and talk to me."

In the dedication of his "Legacy to Parsons," he observes that he calls "it a legacy because I am sure that, long after I shall be laid under the turf, this little book will be an inmate of the cottages of England;" and although he "was born in a cottage and bred to the plough, that men in mighty power were thirty-four years endeavoring to destroy him; that in spite of this he became a Member of Parliament, freely chosen by the sensible and virtuous and spirited people of Oldham, and that his name was William Cobbett."

Cobbett was a most prolific writer, and, exclusive of his newspaper, wrote what he with some propriety called his library. "When I am asked what books a young man or young woman should read, I always answer, let him or her read all the books I have written."

Cobbett published an excellent grammar, but made use of it occasionally, as Johnson did of his dictionary, to convey satire. "Sometimes the hyphen is used," he says, "to connect many words together, as 'the never-to-be-forgotten cruelty of the borough tyrants.'" Again, "Nouns of number, such as mob, Parliament, rabble, House of Commons, regiment, court of King's

Bench, den of thieves," defied a criminal information, and yet conveyed Cobbett's meaning as forcibly as a blunt denunciation.

Cobbett had suffered two years in prison for the freedom of his pen, and when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended he fled to America, but returned two years afterwards, bringing with him the bones of Tom Paine. Byron refers to this fact in a style worthy of Cobbett himself: —

> "In digging up your bones, Tom Paine,
> Will Cobbett has done well;
> You visit him on earth again,
> He 'll visit you in hell."

Upon his return to England, Cobbett tried to get into Parliament, and failed. His speech at the close of the contest at Preston must have delighted his supporters. "Gentlemen, I have done much good to you by coming. I have sweated your tyrants; I have bled them; I have made the silly honorable (the late Lord Derby) throw £15,000 among you, and that is no joke, for though these lords have too much land, they have not too much money. I have tickled the captain too; he must have pledged his half-pay to keep open houses for you, and now he must live on plates of beef and goes of gin for the next seven years."

The popularity of Cobbett at its height was very great; of this he was fully conscious, saying himself that his popularity was owing to his giving truth in clear language.

B. 1763. **SAMUEL ROGERS.** D. 1855.

FRANCES ANN KEMBLE says: "When I used to go and sit with Mr. Rogers, I never asked him what I should read to him without his putting into my hands his own poems, which always lay by him on his table."

"When I was young," Rogers remarked, "I used to say good-natured things, and nobody listened to me. Now that I am old I say ill-natured things, and everybody listens to me."

B. 1769. **DUKE OF WELLINGTON.** D. 1852.

THE despatches of the Duke of Wellington have been thought to be models of their kind, and late in life were appreciated by himself as well as others. It is related that the late Lord Aberdeen repeated to the Duke what Lord Brougham had said, that "when one reads those despatches one sees how it is that there is only one great general in a century." To which the Duke replied, "By God! it is quite true; and when I read them myself, I cannot conceive how I can ever have written them."

He said to Samuel Rogers that at Waterloo "it was a battle of giants."

Madame de Staël said, "There never was so great a man made out of such small materials."

B. 1770. **WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.** D. 1850.

When Wordsworth was told that of all his poems "The Happy Warrior" was Dr. Channing's favorite, he said: "Ay, that was not on account of the poetic conditions being best fulfilled in that poem, but because it is [solemnly] a chain of extremely *valooable* thoughts."

When the conversation had been running upon the wit and humor of Sheridan, Wordsworth said that he did not consider himself to be a witty poet. "Indeed," said he, "I do not think I was ever witty but once in my life." All present clamored for this single specimen. After some reluctance the old poet said, "I was standing sometime ago at the entrance of my cottage at Rydal Mount. A man accosted me with the question, 'Pray, sir, have you seen my wife pass by?' Whereupon I said, 'Why, my good friend, I did n't know till this moment that you had a wife!'" The company stared, but finding this was *the nub*, burst into a roar of laughter, which, in his simplicity, Wordsworth received as a compliment to his brilliant wit.

Charles Mackay called upon him one day, and after a courteous reception, Mackay relates, he suddenly and ungraciously said, "I am told that you write poetry. I never read a line of your poems and don't intend to. You must not be offended with me, but the truth is, I never read anybody's poetry but my

own. You must not be surprised," he added, "for it is not vanity which makes me say this. I am an old man, and little time is left me in the world. I use that little, as well as I may, to revise all of my poems carefully, and make them as perfect as I can before I take my final departure."

Wordsworth once asked Mrs. Alaric Watts what she thought the finest elegiac composition in the language, and when she diffidently suggested "Lycidas," he replied: "You are not far wrong. It may, I think, be affirmed that Milton's 'Lycidas' and my 'Laodamia' are twin immortals."

Living much alone, and where he saw little of the world, he came to regard all as his inferiors, and his conceit had a rank and uninterrupted growth.

B. 1770. **JAMES HOGG.** D. 1835.

James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd of "Maga" (Blackwood's Magazine), is supposed to have changed the date of his birth so as to have it the same day of the month with that of Burns, the parish register recording it December, 1770, while he gave it out as the 25th of January, 1770. He had but six months' schooling, did not write a couplet before he was twenty-six years of age, and never made any revision or corrections. His first poem was "Donald McDonald," but his masterpiece was the "Queen's Wake."

He offered his first poems to Constable, the great publisher in the book-trade at Edinburgh, without the slightest diffidence. He says: "I told him my plan of publication, but he received me coldly, and told me to call again. I did so, when he said he 'would do nothing until he had seen the manuscript.' I refused to give it, saying, 'What skill have you about the merits of a book?' 'It may be so, Hogg,' said he, 'but I know how to sell a book as well as any man, which should be some concern of yours; and I know how to buy one too.'"

When he was told that Burns was the sweetest poet that ever was born, but that he was now dead and that his place would never be supplied, Hogg was by no means sure of that. Said he, "What is to hinder me from succeeding Burns?" When told that Moore's notes were finely strung, he replied, "They are ower finely strung, for mine are just right." The opening of his frank and charming biography starts out as follows: "I like to write about myself; in fact, there are few things I like better."

He described well what he could not successfully practise, sheep-husbandry, and was often a bankrupt. Going to London to superintend the publication of some of his works, where they thought they had caught a second Burns, he was often engaged to banquets and entertainments weeks in advance.

Hogg married a Miss Phillips, and they were entertained at Abbotsford by Walter Scott, who, in proposing a toast to the married pair, began by saying,

"I did not think our friend had so much good sense." He was interrupted by the Shepherd with, "I dinna thank ye for that, Sir Walter!"

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

B. 1772. D. 1834.

"BECAUSE I could read and spell," writes Coleridge, "and had, I may truly say, a memory and understanding forced into almost unnatural ripeness, I was flattered and wondered at by all the old women. And so I became very vain, and despised most of the boys that were at all near my age, and before I was eight years old I was a character. Sensibility, imagination, vanity, sloth, and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for almost all who traversed the orbit of my understanding were even then prominent and manifest."

Coleridge was a capital talker; but when even Carlyle, Wordsworth, or Henry Crabb Robinson were present, they were hardly able to get in a word edgeways. Madame de Staël, when asked what she thought of him, replied, "He is great in monologue, but he has no idea of dialogue."

B. 1774. **ROBERT SOUTHEY.** D. 1843.

SOUTHEY kept upon the anvil his poem of "Madoc" for many years, rewriting and correcting it many times; but it sold very slowly, and all he realized from it was twenty-five pounds. He was not, however, discouraged, and said: "I shall be read by posterity, if I am not read now; read with Milton and Virgil and Dante, when poets whose works are now selling by thousands are only known through a bibliographical dictionary."

Once when Southey was proceeding in this strain, as usual extolling the merits of his productions, the noted wit, Mr. Porson, observed, "I will tell you, sir, what I think of your poetical works: they will be read when Shakspeare's and Milton's are forgotten," — adding, after a pause, "*but not till then.*"

The "Life of Nelson," by Robert Southey, is reckoned among the best biographies extant, and among the great mass of his other works there is much that is still read with interest; but the exalted opinion entertained by the author of these works has not been confirmed by posterity. Here are some specimens of his estimate of himself: —

"1800. 'Thalaba' is finished. You will, I trust, find the Paradise a rich poetical picture, a proof that I can employ magnificence and luxury of language when I think them in place. One overwhelming propensity has formed my destiny, and marred all pros-

pects of rank or wealth; but it has made me happy, *and it will make me immortal.*

"'Thalaba' is a whole and unembarrassed story. I know no poem which can claim a place between it and the 'Orlando.' Let it be weighed with the 'Oberon;' perhaps, were I to speak out, I should not dread a trial with Ariosto. *My proportion of ore to dross is greater.*"

At a later date he predicted that, as a historian, he should rank above Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon; and, as if that were not bold enough, even wrote: —

"I have always flattered myself that my 'History of Brazil' might, in more points than one, be compared with Herodotus, and will hereafter stand in the same relation to the history of that large portion of the new world as his work does to that of the old."

After this no Englishman should laugh at the egotistical extravagances of Châteaubriand or Lamartine.

B. 1775. **CHARLES LAMB.** D. 1834.

In one of the Essays of Elia on "The Old Benches of the Inner Temple," Lamb draws his own character under the name of Lovel: —

"He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty; had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble; moulded heads in clay or

plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; had the merriest quips and conceits; was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire; and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a fishing with."

Charles Lamb's reputation has mainly grown since his death. His first ventures had little of public sympathy, and yielded small profits. According to one of his biographers (Talfourd), he wrote to Procter, "Hang the age! I will write for posterity!" It now turns out that the biographer changed the original words, and that Lamb's words were, "Damn the age! I will write for antiquity." It is true that profanity was not at this time wholly banished from good society; and it is a pity that this eccentric genius, as he himself expresses it, "kept a little on the wrong side of abstemiousness."

When Lamb called upon the poet Wordsworth, he addressed him as follows: "Mr. Wordsworth, allow me to introduce to you my only admirer."

B. 1775. **JAMES BOSWELL.** D. 1822.

WHATEVER rank we may think James Boswell fills as the biographer of Dr. Johnson, most men will admit the absolute verity of Boswell's own prefatory estimate of his work, where he says, "As it is, I will venture to say that he [Dr. Johnson] will be seen in

this work more completely than any man who has ever yet lived."

Boswell, thinking himself greatly superior to Goldsmith, says, when the latter obtained an invitation to dinner from Johnson, that he "went strutting away;" and adds, "I confess I envied him this mighty privilege, of which he seemed so proud; but it was not long before *I* obtained the same mark of distinction."

Boswell was admitted to the celebrated London Literary Club, at the "Turk's Head" Tavern, because he was proposed by Dr. Samuel Johnson, about 1774. Burke, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Garrick, and several other noted men of their day, assembling here periodically, made their table-talk of historic interest. Boswell records much of it. When the eating is over the bottles go their round. Burke takes claret, and the Doctor ejaculates, "Poor stuff, sir. Claret is the liquor for boys, port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy." Burke responds, "Then, sir, give me claret, for I like to be a boy, and partake of the honest hilarity of youth." Sir Joshua Reynolds remarked, "Sir, I think wine is very useful, as well as pleasant; I am sure that moderate drinking makes people talk better." "No, sir," replies the Doctor; "wine gives not light, gay, ideal hilarity, but tumultuous, noisy, clamorous merriment." Boswell, at much risk, now slips in his word: "You must allow, sir, at least, that it produces truth, — *in vino veritas*. A man who is well warmed with wine

will speak the truth." "Why, sir," quoth the Doctor, "that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. But, sir, I would not keep company with a fellow who lies as long as he is sober, and whom you must make drunk before you can get a word of truth out of him." "Sir," answered Bozzy, "I remember how heartily you and I used to drink wine together when we were first acquainted, and how I used to have a headache after sitting up with you." "Nay, sir," said the rough Doctor,[1] "it was not the *wine* that made your head ache, but the *sense* that I put into it."

B. 1777. **THOMAS CAMPBELL.** D. 1844.

The poems of Thomas Campbell — "The Pleasures of Hope," "Gertrude of Wyoming," "The Last Man," and even "Ye Mariners of England" — are as well known on this side of the Atlantic as on the other; and we still find, as Washington Irving said in 1811, "his poems, like the stars, shining on with undiminished lustre." He delivered lectures on poetry before the Royal Institution, taking considerable trouble in trying to rid himself of his broad

[1] Boswell says that once, talking of his being much distinguished at school, Johnson said: "They never thought to raise me by comparing me to any one; they never said Johnson is as good a scholar as such a one, but such a one is as good a scholar as Johnson; and this was said but of one, but of Lowe; and I do not think he was as good a scholar."

Scotch brogue, and wrote to his friend, the Rev. A. Alison: —

"I took, however, great pains with the first lecture; and, though I was flattered by some friends saying I had thrown away too many good things for the audience, yet I have a very different opinion. I felt the effect of every sentence and thought which I had tried to condense. You will think me mad in asserting the audience to be enlightened; but now I must think them so, — wise and enlightened as gods, since they cheered me so! And you will think me very vain in telling you all this."

Byron met him at Holland House, and writes that, after dinner, "We were standing in the ante-saloon when Lord H. brought out of the other room a vessel of some composition similar to that used in Catholic churches; and, seeing us, he exclaimed, 'Here is some incense for you!' Campbell answered, 'Carry it to Lord Byron; he is used to it.'"

It is related that the poet once asked, "Why do Americans always call me Camel? I've no hump on my back."

In his old age he well said, "I believe when I am gone, justice will be done to me in this way, — that I was a pure writer. It is an inexpressible comfort, at my time of life, to be able to look back and feel that I have not written one line against religion or virtue."

B. 1778. **HENRY, LORD BROUGHAM.** D. 1868.

Lord Brougham had great ambition to shine in many parts, to be a universal genius; and yet what fame he has rests mainly upon his speaking talent. As a scientist he now cuts no figure; as a judge, it was said he would have done well enough if he had only known a little law; as one of the writers of the "Edinburgh Review" he was jealous of his co-laborers, and berated Macaulay, who in return calls him a bad man. Of himself Brougham says, "It has always been my chief ambition as to literary character (after eloquence, of course), — I mean the rank and station of an historian. I have some little knack of narrative, the most difficult by far of all styles, and never yet attained in perfection but by Hume and Livy; and I bring as much oratory and science to the task as most of my predecessors; nor do the exceedingly flimsy and puerile works of Alison, etc., deter me from my favorite subject, — French Revolution."

When Lord Brougham was first made a member of the Liberal Cabinet, as Lord Chancellor, by Earl Grey, he is reported to have said, "The Whigs are all ciphers, and I am the only unit in the Cabinet that gives a value to them." It is needless, perhaps, to add that he soon quarrelled with his associates, and his career as Chancellor quickly ended.

A lady once asked Lord Brougham who was the best debater in the House of Lords. His lordship

modestly replied, "Lord Stanley is the second, madam;" evidently intending to leave the first place open to himself.[1] And in this he was not unlike every officer after the naval victory of the Greeks over Xerxes, when each one, when called upon to say who had most distinguished himself, put his own name first and that of Themistocles second.

Lord Brougham had an omnivorous appetite for praise. Six of his articles were admitted into one number of the "Edinburgh Review," and yet he complained before the issue of the next that he was "next thing to laid on the shelf."

In the published correspondence of the late Macvey Napier, public curiosity has been largely fed by the letters of distinguished contributors to the "Edinburgh Review," where all reserve seems to have been flung aside and the sharpest personal criticisms found vent, mixed with occasional stalwart vanity. The editor, Napier, found it no light matter to keep the peace among so many, each one of them having a reputation, and all eager for more. When with scissors he invaded an article from Thackeray, the latter could not refrain from writing back:

[1] Hazlitt records a story of a foolish bell-ringer at Plymouth, as told by Northcote. He was proud of his ringing, and the boys, who made a jest of his foible, used to get him into the belfry and ask, "Well now, John, how many good ringers are there in Plymouth?" "Two," he would say, without any hesitation. "Ay, indeed! and who are they?" "Why, first, there's myself, that's one; and — and —" "Well, who's the other?" "Why, there's, there's — Ecod! I can't think of any other but myself."

"From your liberal payment, I can't but conclude that you reward me not only for laboring, but for being mutilated in your service." Bulwer Lytton thanks the editor for "smoothing his article into shape," but cannot understand what were really his faults of style. Macaulay hoped the editor would "not scruple to exercise" his prerogative; but when the scissors were applied we find him wincing. "The passages omitted," he complains, "were the most pointed and ornamental sentences in the review." Brougham gave the editor perpetual trouble. Forward to claim the first place himself, he could not tolerate the admiration of the editor nor of the public for Macaulay; and when the latter was asked to yield a topic he had begun to treat to Brougham, he was indignant, and declared he was "the person of all persons to whom he felt least inclined to stoop." In another letter Macaulay says: "Brougham does one thing well, two or three things indifferently, and a hundred things detestably. His Parliamentary speaking is admirable, his forensic speaking poor, his writings at the very best second-rate."

But the appearance of any article by Macaulay seems to have been a signal for Brougham to unbottle his bile. Of Macaulay's Essay on Sir William Temple, he says it is "an excellent paper, only he does take a terrible space to turn in. Good God! what an awful man he would have been in Nisi Prius! He can say nothing under ten pages. He takes as long to delineate three characters of little importance

as I have to sketch ten, the greatest in the whole world."

The unhesitating manner of Brougham in self-applause would alone make him wonderful. About one of his speeches he writes: "I was obliged to exert myself last night as I had not done for years. The speech has made a great noise; but, if it had one fault, there was no relief, no ordinary matter for the mind to rest upon. Every sentence was a figure or a passage. I marked that, for an hour and a half by the clock, I was speaking in tropes and allusions." He ratted from his party when not asked to join the Cabinet, and said he punished them daily. "Depend upon it," he writes, "there is no great comfort ever accrues to those who try their hands on my back."

He did not hesitate to puff himself in articles published in the "Review," where he prints: "Of all the portentous signs of the times for the present Ministry, the most appalling is the nearly unanimous choice of Mr. Brougham to be member for Yorkshire. This is assuredly the most extraordinary event in the history of party politics."

But Brougham at last occupied one field of vanity, where he stands alone the unchallenged pioneer. He caused it to be given out that he had been killed in a carriage accident, merely to learn what eulogiums would be presented by the newspapers, and which it appears he enjoyed keenly. "A lie, daily repeated," as he wrote to Napier — but did not tell by whom it was concocted — "by two or three papers in London

and one in Edinburgh, has deceived you all; namely, that the people of this country no longer have any care about me. Is it so? Look at the last week and tell. Let this show the risk of men in a party giving up an old leader because another happened for the hour to be invested with office."

And yet Brougham, "the tremendous Harry," was for some years actually the most important person in the British Parliament.

When Brougham was made Lord Chancellor the following sarcasm, attributed to Baron Alderson, was set afloat: "What a wonderful, versatile mind has Brougham! He knows politics, Greek, history, science; if he only knew a little of law, he would know a little of everything."

B. 1605. **SIR THOMAS BROWNE.** D. 1682.

Sir Thomas Browne says that "King Philip did not detract from the nation when he said he sent his Armada to fight with men, and not to combat with the winds.

"The success of that petty province of Holland (of which the Grand Seigneur proudly said, if they should trouble him as they did the Spaniard, he would send his men with shovels and pickaxes and throw it into the sea) I cannot altogether ascribe to the ingenuity and industry of the people, but to the mercy of God.

"Men are like ships, — the more they contain, the lower they carry their head."

B. 1778. **WILLIAM HAZLITT.** D. 1830.

"HERE, too, I have written Table-Talks without number, and as yet without falling off, till now that they are nearly done, or I should not make this boast, I could swear (were they not mine) the thoughts in many of them are founded as the rock, free as air, the tone like an Italian picture."

It is related that John Lamb, the brother of Charles, once knocked down Hazlitt, who was impertinent to him; and on those who were present interfering, and begging of Hazlitt to shake hands and forgive him, Hazlitt said, "Well, I don't care if I do. I am a metaphysician, and do not mind a blow; nothing but an idea hurts me."

Hazlitt, in one of his essays, declares that "no great man ever thought himself so." He should at least have excepted himself.

In his "Table-Talk" he makes the following confession: "I feel the force of Horace's *digito monstrari.* I like to be pointed out in the street, or to hear people ask in Mr. Powell's Court, 'Which is Mr. H——?' This is to me a pleasing extension of one's personal identity. Your name so repeated leaves an echo like music on the ear. It stirs the blood like the sound of a trumpet. It shows that other people are curious to

see you; that they think of you, and feel an interest in you, without your knowing it. This is a bolster to lean upon; a lining to your poor, shivering, threadbare opinion of yourself. You want some such cordial to exhausted spirits, and relief to the dreariness of abstract speculation."

B. 1778. **SIR HUMPHRY DAVY.** D. 1829.

PERHAPS men who claim to have been self-taught are more apt to make that circumstance in their personal history known than are school-taught men to make known their "previous condition of servitude." It should be conceded, however, that no far-reaching education can be acquired where self does not play the leading part. Sir Humphry Davy, when at the height of his well-earned fame, declared, "What I am I have made myself." Here the personal pronoun, in the first person, singular number, is very prominent; and yet it may be that he only intended to have it understood that his great learning, researches, and experiments had been mainly pursued since he left school at the early age of fifteen.

B. 1780. **ROBERT EMMET.** D. 1803.

THIS great Irish orator and patriot had as sublime a confidence in future fame as that expressed by Bacon; and the last thing he said, just before the death-sentence was pronounced, was: "When my

country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written."

B. 1779. **THOMAS MOORE.** D. 1845.

Moore said he had had great pleasure in complying with Lockhart's wish to give him his impression of Sir Walter Scott's ability as a poet and novelist, and had paid an ungrudging tribute to the great and good man's memory, though he owned to having been much mortified at being unable to find an excuse for introducing a word about himself.

It seems he had once visited Scott, and what he wanted to introduce was the unparalleled reception awarded to himself when accompanying Sir Walter Scott to the Edinburgh Theatre. "Although," he said, "I merely went under Scott's wing, and as his guest, and though Scott at the time was the national idol, the moment we appeared, I heard my name cried out. It spread like wildfire through the house. He was nowhere, and I was cheered and applauded to the very echo. When the Life, however, came out, I was rewarded for my self-denial by finding that Lockhart himself had done ample justice to the scene."

One day at Miss B. Coutts's he became taciturn and sulky when Dickens came in. After he had gone, Moore, evidently contrasting their respective reputa-

tions, said, "I dare say Dickens is pointed out as 'Boz' wherever he goes. So was I once pointed out as 'Tom Little.' I can't say how sad I feel when I go to the opera *now*. I take up my lorgnette and see no one I know or who knows me. Twenty years ago I flitted from box to box like a butterfly from flower to flower. Go where I would, I was greeted with smiles. I could not pass through the lobby of a theatre without hearing people whisper as I passed, 'That is Tom Moore.' Now, no one knows me, and no one cares for me. *Telle est la vie.* Heigh-ho!"

The following shows that Moore had some substantial claims to his fame as a poet: —

"Look how the lark soars upward and is gone,
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky!
His voice is heard, but body there is none
To fix the vague excursions of the eye.
So poets' songs are with us, though they die
Obscured, and hid by Death's oblivious shroud,
And Earth inherits the rich melody,
Like raining music from the morning cloud.
Yet few there be who pipe so sweet and loud;
Their voices reach us through the lapse of space:
The noisy day is deafened by a crowd
Of undistinguished birds, a twittering race;
But only lark and nightingale forlorn
Fill up the silences of night and morn."

B. 1780. JOHN WILSON CROKER. D. 1857.

THIS rather remarkable man appears to have been first brought prominently before the public by Macaulay's trenchant criticism of his edition of Boswell's "Life of Johnson," and last, with the opportunity to retaliate, when Macaulay's "History of England" came out, by such a review of it as to leave it without much reputation as a history, whatever it may hold as a brilliant novel. Croker was a Tory, while Macaulay was a Whig, and neither was lacking in the power and skill to wage a literary warfare, nor in brimming self-appreciation. One early example of Mr. Croker here will do. He was first elected to Parliament in 1807, and started forthwith into debate.

"I spoke very early," he wrote on the margin of a biographical sketch, "indeed, on the very night I took my seat. Some observations of Mr. Grattan on the state of Ireland, which I thought injurious and unfounded, called me up, — nothing loath, I dare say, but quite unexpectedly, even to myself; and though so obviously unpremeditated, and as it were occasional, I, in after years, was not altogether flattered at hearing that my first speech was the best. I suspect it was so. Canning, whom I had never seen before, asked Mr. Foster to introduce me to him after the division, was very kind, and walked home with me to my lodgings."

Croker declared that Wellington's success at Waterloo was only a fortunate accident; and intimated that

he could have done better himself under similar circumstances. "Oh yes," said Lady Morgan, "he could pile his notes on Boswell's 'Johnson' in front, and all the Bonapartes that ever existed could not get through them."

B. 1781. **LORD JOHN CAMPBELL.** D. 1861.

When Lord Campbell, author of the "Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Lord Chief Justices," stood as a candidate in Edinburgh for Parliament, he addressed them thus: —

"Gentlemen, electors of Edinburgh and fellow-countrymen, here is a *plain John Campbell* before you as a candidate for the high honor of your suffrages. I must say that I think it rather hard on me to say that if I had been merely plain John Campbell I might have been elected, and that all hopes of my ambition being crowned with success must be forever extinguished by the eminence to which I have had the good fortune to attain."

He got the seat, notwithstanding he was something more than plain John Campbell, — a fact which he appeared after all not unwilling to have known.

Campbell, in his younger days, when in low spirits, appeared contented to lead the life of a clergyman, as his father had proposed, and wrote to his father: —

"My opinion of myself becomes lower and lower every day. I have no longer the most distant hope of

ever composing with elegance, or of making any figure in the literary world. I can only wish for some retreat where I might employ myself in writing sermons and fattening pigs, where I might live and die unknown."

Soon after, and before he had reached the age of twenty-one, he writes to his father in a different strain: —

"When I am in bad spirits, and sitting alone in my gloomy garret, I contemplate with pleasure the idea of being licensed and procuring a settlement in the Church. I spurn it when I hear the eloquent addresses of Law, of Gibbs, of Erskine; and while my heart burns within me, a secret voice assures me that if I make the attempt I shall be as great as they."

To his sister, only a few weeks later, he wrote:

"Although I am friendless at present, I am not sure that it ought to be assumed that I shall be without friends six years hence. During that long period surely some opportunity will occur of forming desirable connections, and every opportunity I shall sedulously improve. In about six years after I am called to the Bar, I expect to have distinguished myself so much as to be in possession of a silk gown and a seat in Parliament. I shall not have been long in the House of Commons before I interest the Minister in my favor, and am made Solicitor-General. The steps then, though high, are easy; and, after being a short time Attorney-General, and Master of the Rolls, I shall get the seals with the title of Earl Auld-Kirk-

Yaird. I am sorry that this last sentence has escaped me, as it is the only one that did not come from the bottom of my heart."

He did obtain his silk gown in six years; the Attorney-Generalship and the seat in Parliament, however, hung back for more than thirty years; but at length all the dreams of his boyhood were more than fulfilled, and at the age of eighty, having been Chief Justice of England for ten years, he became Lord Chancellor, and was found equal to the "labors and anxieties of the Great Seal." Few boys have been able to mark out for themselves a career among distinguished men with greater accuracy.

B. 1784. JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT. D. 1874.

LEIGH HUNT is said to have dearly loved praise; that is to say, he desired sympathy as a flower seeks sunshine, and accepted the incense with a gracious satisfaction. He cannot be blamed, however, for accepting the tribute which he describes as follows:

"Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in.
Time, you thief! who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in.
Say I 'm weary, say I 'm sad;
Say health and wealth have missed me;
Say I 'm growing old, but add —
Jenny kissed me!"

B. 1786. **THOMAS DE QUINCEY.** D. 1859.

"At thirteen," says De Quincey, "I wrote Greek with ease; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great, that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but could converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment, — an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which, in my case, was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish *extempore*. . . . 'That boy,' said one of my masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, — 'that boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one.'" [1]

B. 1788. **LORD BYRON.** D. 1824.

(George Gordon Noel.)

Many of the poets have been great egotists, and their heroes often seem only modified portraits of themselves. Byron is as much his own Cain, or his own Don Juan, as Goethe is his own Faust, or Milton his own Satan. They look for and find the grandest ideals of intellectual force in themselves.

[1] George P. Marsh, while Minister at Constantinople, was sent on a special mission to Greece, and, it is said, was quite competent to carry on conversation in the Greek language, although there is much difference in the language of modern Greece from that of Homer and Plato.

Byron was not unwilling to style himself "the Napoleon of rhyme," perhaps with some truth; but it should be remembered that his "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte," after his fall and captivity at St. Helena, was not a flattering portrait of the ex-emperor: —

"'T is done — but yesterday a king,
And armed with kings to strive —
And now thou art a nameless thing,
So abject — yet alive!
Since he, miscalled the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far."

If Byron went to Greece, not to fight for glory, but, as has been said, to be rid of Madame Guiccioli, his own life is robbed of its heroic conclusion.

In most of Byron's poetry he is supposed to be the chief figure. For instance, he says: —

"For I am as a weed
Flung from the rock, on ocean's foam to sail,
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail."

And again he draws his own portrait as follows: —

"I disdained to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader — and of wolves.
The lion is alone, and so am I."

Lord Byron was very apprehensive that he might be excluded from the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, the "temple" where Great Britain gathers her honored dead. His doubt is disclosed in the following melancholy accents: —

> "I twine
> My hopes of being remembered in my line
> With my land's language; if too fond and far
> These aspirations in their scope incline, —
> If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
> Of hasty growth and blight, and dull oblivion bar
> My name from out the temple where the dead
> Are honored by the nations — let it be —
> And light the laurels on a loftier head!"

"If I live," he wrote to Moore, Feb. 28, 1817, "ten years longer, you will see, however, that it is not over with me, — I don't mean in literature, for that is nothing; and it may seem odd enough to say, I do not think it my vocation. But you will see that I will do something or other — the times and fortune permitting — that, 'like the cosmogony or creation of the world, will puzzle the philosophers of all ages.' But I doubt whether my constitution will hold out." This would seem to contradict his "hopes of being remembered in my line with my land's language." But it is uncertain whether he was then dreaming of becoming King of Greece, or of dying like a hero fighting against the Turks.

According to Leigh Hunt's diary, Byron angrily returned a box of pills to an apothecary because the packet was directed to *Mr.* Byron instead of Lord Byron. But Hunt was not eager to show any good-will to Byron.

Byron wrote with marvellous rapidity. He threw off "The Corsair" in ten days, "The Bride of Abydos" in four. While his poems were printing,

he added to and corrected them, but never re-cast them. "I told you before," he writes, "that I never re-cast anything. I am like the tiger: if I miss the first spring, I go grumbling back to my jungle again; but if I do it, it is crushing."

After the first two cantos of "Childe Harold" had been published, he said, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous."

B 1793. WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY. D. 1873.

THE egotism of Macready, as appears from his published "Diary" of 1843, was a trifle large: —

"Oct. 23. Acted Macbeth equal, if not superior, as a whole, to any performance I have ever given of the character. I should say it was a noble piece of art. Called for warmly, and warmly received. The Miss Cushman who acted Lady Macbeth interested me much. She has to learn her art, but she showed mind and sympathy with me, — a novelty so refreshing to me on the stage."

B. 1795. THOMAS CARLYLE. D. 1881.

IN 1820 Carlyle wrote a letter to his mother, from which the following is an extract: —

"I am not of a humor to care very much for good or evil fortune, so far as concerns myself. The thought that my somewhat uncertain condition gives

you uneasiness chiefly grieves me. Yet I would not have you despair of your ribe of a boy. He will do something yet. He is a shy, stingy soul, and very likely has a higher notion of his parts than others have. But, on the other hand, he is not incapable of diligence. He is harmless, and possesses the virtue of his countrymen, — thrift; so that, after all, things will yet be right in the end. My love to all the little ones.

"Your affectionate son,

"T. CARLYLE."

Thomas Carlyle in 1832 had been waiting long in vain to find a publisher for his "History of the French Revolution," and felt that the world was in its "dotage" because it was not more appreciative of his merits. He writes: "I have given up the notion of hawking my little manuscript book about any further: for a long time it has lain quiet in its drawer, *waiting for a better day.* The bookselling trade seems on the edge of dissolution."

The work was not published until even five years after this, and then his graphic history fully justified the high opinion of the author.

Carlyle wrote to his brother, John Carlyle, Jan. 12, 1835, as follows: "In a word, my prospects here are not sensibly brightening; if it be not in this, that the longer I live among this people the deeper grows my feeling — not a vain one — a sad one — of natural superiority over them; of being able (were the tools

in my hands) to do a hundred things better than the hundred I see paid for doing them."

He writes in his journal, Feb. 7, 1835, just after he had finished the first book of the "French Revolution:" "It has become clear to me that I have honestly more force and faculty in me than belongs to the most I see. It was always clear that no honestly exerted force can be utterly lost. Were it long years after I am dead, in regions far distant from this, under names far different from thine, the seed thou sowest *will* spring."

In his journal of April 10 he wrote: "I can in no way get on with this wretched book of mine." But to his brother on the same day he wrote: "With health and peace for one year, it seems to me often as if I could write a better book than any there has been in the country for generations."

B. 1795. **JOHN KEATS.** D. 1821.

FEW poets have been born with a higher right to believe they were destined to do something "fit to live" than Keats; and in the preface to the little volume published in 1818 he says: "The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they, if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good: it will not; the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this young-

ster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting and fitting myself for verses fit to live."

The same idea is to be found in some of his verses, as the following: —

> "So that we look around with prying stare,
> Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial limning;
> And catch the soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning,
> To see the laurel-wreath on high suspended,
> That is to crown our name when life is ended."

In 1821 he visited a milder climate to save himself from the ravages of consumption, of which a brother had been a victim; but he died in Rome soon after his arrival. A few days before his death he said that he "felt the daisies growing over him." Upon the tomb was inscribed the epitaph dictated by himself: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." But his modest hope, that "after his death he would be among the poets of England," has been realized beyond all he could have anticipated.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

B. 1800. D. 1859.

"I READ Guizot's 'Sir Robert Peel,'" writes Macaulay; and adds: "Hardly quite worthy of Guizot's powers, I think; nor can it be accepted as a just estimate of Peel. *I could draw his portrait much better;* but for many reasons I shall not do so."

Lord Macaulay in 1852 writes: "My book seems to me certain to be a failure. Yet when I look up any part and read it, I cannot but see that it is better than other works on the same subject."

Oct. 8, 1853, he writes: "I worked at the Factory speech, but did little. I like the speech amazingly; I rather think that it is my very best."

Writing of the House of Commons (Dec. 19, 1845), he says: "Labouchere and Baring are at least as good men of business as Grey; and I may say without vanity that I have made speeches which were out of the reach of any of them. But taking the talent for business and the talent for speaking together, Grey is undoubtedly the best qualified for the lead; and we are perfectly sensible of this."

Macaulay observed great method in his daily task of writing, — as was said of Sir Walter Raleigh, "he could labor terribly," — but worked only so long as he could do his best. "I had no head to write," he says in his journal of March 6, 1851. "I am too self-indulgent in this matter, it may be; and yet I attribute much of the success which I have had to my habit of writing only when I am in the humor, and of stopping as soon as the thoughts and words cease to flow fast. There are, therefore, few lees in my wine; it is all the cream of the bottle."

In 1842 he wrote to the editor of the "Edinburgh Review" as follows: "My reviews are generally thought to be better written, and they certainly live longer, than the reviews of most other people; and

this ought to content me." He did not care what the Yankees did with his reviews; but at this time he did not favor their republication in England, but said: "If I live twelve or fifteen years, I may perhaps produce something which I may not be afraid to exhibit side by side with the performances of the old masters."

Macaulay, when about to review Croker's Boswell's "Johnson," observed: "See whether I do not dust that varlet's jacket for him." Of course he did it, afterwards having his own back not lightly touched in return; but it was not unlike the self-confidence of Daniel Webster, — who had as little of self-consciousness as even Shakspeare, — upon the evening before he made his celebrated reply to Hayne, who, when inquired of by a friend whether he was ready, answered that he had *got four fingers in*, — words which indicated a heavy charge of powder for the old Springfield musket. But even Webster, after being defeated as a candidate for the Presidency, did not hesitate to say that the nomination of General Taylor was one "not fit to be made;" and yet he promptly accepted the first place as Secretary of State in the Cabinet of Fillmore, vice-President elected on the same ticket, and who became President upon the death of President Taylor.

Upon his own style, as a writer of history, Macaulay bestowed this very just criticism, — that it was "a good style, but very near a bad one."

When Macaulay had finished two volumes of his "History of England," he wrote on the eve of their publication as follows: "I am pretty well satisfied, as compared with excellence, the work is a failure; but as compared with other similar books, I cannot think so. We shall soon know what the world says."

The memory of Macaulay was most extraordinary, and he was able to recite the greater part of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" after reading it for the first time. He used to say that if by any chance all the existing copies of Milton were to be destroyed, he thought he could replace the first six books of "Paradise Lost" from memory.

B. 1800. **SIR HENRY TAYLOR.** D. 1885.

For almost fifty years Henry Taylor served as a clerk in the Colonial Office, London, and at the age of sixty-nine years he was made a Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George, but failed to be made a life peer. At the age of thirty-four he published at his own risk (his publisher having suffered a loss in a prior publication) his remarkable play of "Philip van Artevelde," from which the words, "The world knows nothing of its greatest men," are often quoted, as well as many others.

It is quite clear that young Taylor, while possessing much real ability, never underrated himself.

His faults, as he says, were "arrogance and impertinence." When not much above twenty-two years of age he made application to his superior for promotion in the public service, and informed him in a long letter that "ever since he entered the office he had been doing the work of a statesman." The application was refused, but he was not dismissed. Later in life he calmly claimed that "in point of intellectual range he regarded Sir James Stephen and Mr. Gladstone as belonging to the same order of minds as his own."

At the age of thirty-six he published the volume entitled "The Statesman," in which he hoped to supply the *deficiencies* of Lord Bacon's "De Augmentis;" and he appears to have thought it not robbery of Bacon to accept as a valid compliment the flattery of a bishop who told him that *his work showed Bacon resurrected.* A small edition was published in 1836, and only exhausted in 1873. His Autobiography recently appeared, and recalls some attention to his literary works.

When he was about to publish "Philip van Artevelde" he wrote to his father, "I do unquestionably conceive that my vocation is to write plays, and that my life will give out the larger sum-total of results in proportion as it shall be devoted to this employment." The play as a volume to read was an undoubted success, although many times too long for the stage; but his vocation, while furnishing four or five so-called plays, has failed to furnish anything called for by the

public. His mother, after his play of "Van Artevelde" had appeared, wrote to him, "I suppose you are sick of the sound of praise by this time." To which he answered, "I am not in the least sick of the sound of praise, but, on the contrary, begin to think that I can digest any quantity of it."

Sir Henry disclosed the same feeling in 1862, when, at his request, Carlyle sent him a batch of letters he had received complimentary to himself, and wrote: "I do not encourage my friends to talk to me about my own performances, except where they have objections to make. If you hit, you do not care about the subject; if you miss, praise won't mend it." "My answer was," says Sir Henry, "I do not agree with you about praise. I like it."

In a poem he wrote in 1844 he rather neatly and complacently reviews the successive stages of his career, thus: —

> "A change again — my name had travelled far,
> And in the world's applausive countenance kind
> I sunned myself; not fearing so to mar
> That strength of heart and liberty of mind
> Which comes but by hard nurture. Me, though blind,
> God's mercy spared, — from social snares with ease
> Saved by that gracious gift, inaptitude to please."

When Wordsworth died (1850), Sir G. C. Lewis proposed that Taylor should be appointed poet-laureate, on the ground that Tennyson was "little known."

"The absence of fastidiousness," Sir Henry writes, "made me harmless in society, but there was nothing

that I knew to make me agreeable. My mind had nothing of the 'touch-and-go' movement which can alone enable a man to take a pleasant part in conversation. As to wit, I can invent it in my study, and make it spurt from the mouth of a *dramatis persona;* but elsewhere I have no power of producing it with any but an infelicitous effect."

B. 1802. **HARRIET MARTINEAU.** D. 1876.

As is well known, Harriet Martineau held to the doctrine of annihilation. So repugnant was this idea to W. E. Forster, M. P., that he said he "would rather be damned than annihilated;" upon which Miss Martineau observed that if he once felt five minutes' damnation, he would be thankful for extinction in preference.

When the printer of her book on Political Economy was about to draw back, afraid of the venture, she said: "But I tell you this: the people want this book, and they *shall* have it."

It turned out as she said.

B. 1803. **DOUGLAS WILLIAM JERROLD.** D. 1857.

JERROLD was much elated upon the success of the first performance of his comedy of "Time works Wonders." A friend who returned with him to the door of his hotel, expressed his gratification at the

author's well-merited triumph, when Jerrold, turning round and slapping his chest with his hand, exultingly exclaimed, "Yes, and here 's the little man that 's done it."

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON.

B. 1804. D. 1872.

Some men prefer to be abused rather than not to be noticed by the public. Even Edward Bulwer-Lytton, the novelist, felt hurt that he had not been (Sept. 8, 1830) reviewed in the "Edinburgh Review," and so wrote to the editor, "I think I have no pretensions to be praised by the 'Edinburgh,' but I think I have some to be reviewed." He refers to the large sale of his novels, and to their translation into most European languages, and adds, "So that, if they now stand at the door of the 'Edinburgh Review,' it is not cap in hand as a humble mendicant, but rather like a bluff creditor who answers your accusations of his impertinence by begging you to settle his bill at the first opportunity."

Three days after he comes to the scratch again, and says: "Now I see the whole matter. The long and short of it is, I must be attacked. God forbid I should say a word against that!" He closes by saying: "God bless you; and mind, your contributors are at full liberty to ridicule, abuse, and (allow the author of 'Paul Clifford' to employ a slang word) victimize me,

so long as you say, with a gentle shake of the head, 'Oh! he is not such a bad fellow after all.'"

Like Bulwer, Brougham desired to have his works reviewed, and wrote to the editor of the "Edinburgh" as follows: "Pray are not my 'Principia' and 'Instinct' to be reviewed? It should be done without any praise at all, even if it deserved it; but it should really have the benefit of being made known. The 'Instinct' is *full of original ideas and arguments.* The 'Principia' is the only *deep and learned commentary* on the greatest and most inaccessible work of man; and yet I undertake to say it enables any one to read and follow it."

B. 1805. **BENJAMIN DISRAELI.** D. 1880.

(Earl of Beaconsfield.)

Disraeli, the late Premier of Great Britain, presented himself as a candidate for Parliament several times before he finally succeeded in entering. On one of these occasions, about 1835, in the course of his canvass he publicly denounced Daniel O'Connell as a "bloody traitor." To this O'Connell afterwards replied, taking advantage of Disraeli's Jewish parentage, and said, for aught he knew, Disraeli might be "the true heir-at-law of the impenitent thief who died on the cross." For this Disraeli challenged the son of the Great Agitator, Morgan O'Connell, but the challenge was not accepted. The published correspondence

showed that Disraeli threatened to meet the redoubtable Daniel at Philippi, where he would avenge the insult upon the first opportunity; and accordingly his first speech in Parliament contained a violent denunciation of O'Connell. But it was such a notable failure as to be greeted with continual jeers and laughter. He ended it, however, amid all sorts of loud noises, with these words: "I am not surprised at the reception I have experienced. I have succeeded at last. Ay, sir; and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me." And it did come, only two years afterwards.

When John Bright was told that he must give Mr. Disraeli credit for being a self-made man, he added, "And he adores his maker."

B. 1809. **LORD HOUGHTON.** D. 1885.

(Richard Monckton Milnes.)

Lord Houghton, though in one House of Parliament or the other all his life after he was twenty-seven years of age, was not naturally a good public speaker; but by infinite pains he acquired so much of the art as to satisfy his friends that he did not much over-estimate himself when he said to the Prince of Wales, after listening to the Prince one evening, "The two best after-dinner speakers, sir, are your Royal Highness and myself."

B. 1810. MARTIN FARQUHAR TUPPER.

THIS poet, almost of a former generation, shows his solid satisfaction with his own work by relating to most of his visitors that his best-known work, "Proverbial Philosophy," "has circulated to the extent of a million and a quarter of copies, chiefly in America," and that it has probably been read more widely than any other book save the Bible. This enables him to bear up under many stinging criticisms. He visited America in 1851 and in 1877, and says: "I went everywhere as a welcome visitor, saw everything worth seeing, dined with everybody of note, from the millionnaire on gold plate, to the Quaker Friend on pure white china, was made free of clubs and societies, was interviewed and photographed, was ridiculed, censured, and praised, and was made a thesis for article-writers and a butt for many humorists." He appears to have been delighted with it all, and does not hesitate to show a volume published in Philadelphia in 1852, entitled "Proverbs illustrated by Parallel or Relative Passages from the Poets." "It consists," the author says, "of sands of gold sifted from the flood of literature, or the wise sayings of Solomon, Shakspeare, and Tupper, exemplified by the poets," and its object is "to furnish the means of employing the otherwise idle moments that occur in every one's life, by holding converse with the three great proverbialists." This is nice for Tupper, but what would Solomon say?

The Autobiography he has just published is very full of his ever-prominent and harmless egotism. Some of it is interesting. He can hardly be blamed for remembering that when he was at Christ Church, Oxford, he "had the honor of being prize-taker of Dr. Burton's theological essay, 'The Reconciliation of Matthew and John,' when Gladstone, who had also contested it, stood second;" "and when Dr. Burton," he says, "had me before him to give me the £25 worth of books, he requested me to allow Mr. Gladstone to have £5 worth of them, as he was so good a second."

FRANCES ANN KEMBLE BUTLER.

B. 1811.

Fanny Kemble unquestionably possessed hereditary talent as an actress, and in her girlhood was a conspicuous theatrical attraction. She married Pierce Butler in 1834, — a rich Philadelphian owning slaves in South Carolina, — from whom she was divorced in 1849; and although she spent some share of her life in America, she was intensely English, and had that affection for America she may be supposed once to have had for her husband, — that is to say, a lively appreciation of the possible addition to her pecuniary resources. Her self-appreciation, in her letters, is carefully veiled by constant self-depreciation which she knows her correspondents will swiftly dispute. She writes: —

"I sometimes fancied, too, that but for the amount of letter-writing I perform, I might (perhaps) write carefully and satisfactorily something that might (perhaps) be worth reading, something that might (perhaps) in some degree approach my standard of a tolerably good literary production, — some novel or play, some work of imagination, — and that my much letter-writing is against this: but I dare say this is a mistaken notion, and that I should never under any circumstances write anything worth anything."

In one of her letters, after she had agreed, in 1848, upon the terms for a theatrical engagement, she writes as follows: —

"I am most thankful that the depression and discouragement under which I succumbed for a while have been thus speedily relieved. It is a curious sensation to have a certain consciousness of power (which I have, though perhaps it is quite a mistaken notion), and at the same time of absolute helplessness. . . . Is it not well that people of great genius are always *proud as well as humble*, and that the consciousness of their own nobility spreads, as it were, the wings of an angel between them and all the baseness and barrenness through which they are often compelled to wade up to the lips?"

B. 1812. **CHARLES DICKENS.** D. 1870.

From a letter of Dickens to Macready, dated at Baltimore, March 22, 1842, I give the following extract:

"Macready, if I had been born here and had written my book in this country, producing no stamps of approval from any other land, it is my solemn belief that I should have lived and died poor, unnoticed, and a black sheep to boot. I never was more convinced of anything than of that."

At twelve years of age he was placed with a relative engaged in making Warren's Blacking. It is clear he thought his father might have done better by him, for he writes about it thus: —

"It is wonderful to me that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I have been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me — a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally — to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school.

"My whole nature was so penetrated with grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children, even that I am a man, and wander desolately back to that time of my life."

When writing the fifteenth number of the "Pickwick Papers," he wrote to a friend: "I am getting

on, thank Heaven! like a house o' fire, and think the next Pickwick will bang all the others."

It may be observed that most authors are apt to esteem their last work as their very best, and praise does not seem to have been unacceptable to Dickens, as appears from a reply he made to Lord Lytton, as follows: —

"I received your letter in praise of 'Dr. Marigold,' and read and re-read all your generous words fifty times over, with inexpressible delight. I cannot tell you how they gratified and affected me."

In a letter to Thomas Hutton about one of his earlier works, the "Christmas Carol," the following is found: —

"My dear Hutton, — I am extremely glad you feel the Carol. For I know I meant a good thing; and when I see the effect of such a little *whole* as that, on those for whom I care, I have a strong sense of the immense effect I could produce with an entire book. I am quite certain of that."

B. 1815. ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

Anthony Trollope, in the "North American Review," writes very patronizingly of our poet Longfellow, says he has "crept up to our hearts," and assures his readers that he is an "uncommonly pleasant fellow;" but he does not allow him to be quite the equal of his favorite English poets. He

would not hurt his feelings, but then he is "not great —seldom magnificent." In order to unfold the poetic graces of Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Trollope contrives to push his own merits to the front, and is kind enough to say: —

"I myself cannot describe places; I enjoy the beauty and the feeling of scenic effect, but I lack the words to render them delightful to others. But I have some trick in depicting scenes, and have been often complimented on my sketch of clerical life. I am told that I must have lived in cathedral cities, and the like, and have with a certain mild denial carried off the compliments."

Mr. Longfellow is always modest; and, with all his readers, here and abroad, never claimed that he was "often complimented;" nor "carried off the compliments with a certain mild denial."

B. 1819. JOHN RUSKIN.

Perhaps no modern writer has presented to the public more or better examples of attractive and sparkling English than Mr. Ruskin. Whether we agree with him or not, his original and racy style, as in the "Stones of Venice," will long command attention; and yet his unbounded satisfaction with his own *ex cathedra* judgment upon all questions of politics, as well as of the arts, and of all things human and divine, is less hidden by any modest drapery than the limbs of a ballet-dancer in a French opera-house.

His preface to the letters just published runs and ripples with what he appropriately describes as "extremely fine compliments to himself." Dated at Rouen, he finds himself, he says, "lying in bed in the morning, reading these remnants of my old self, and that with much contentment and thankful applause." As to the letters, he adds: "In the entire mass of them there is not a word I wish to change, not a statement I have to retract; and, I believe, few pieces of advice which the reader will not find it for his good to act upon."

One more extract from this lofty preface to lofty letters of forty years, which in their day were by no means dull reading: —

"Whatever (for instance) I have urged in economy has ten times the force when it is remembered to have been pleaded for by a man loving the splendor and advising the luxury of ages which overlaid their towers with gold and their walls with ivory. No man oftener than I has had cast into his teeth the favorite adage of the insolent and the feeble, — *ne sutor*. But it has always been forgotten by the speakers that, although the proverb might on some occasions be wisely spoken by an artist to a cobbler, it could never be wisely spoken by a cobbler to an artist."[1]

[1] On a steamer from Calais to Dover (Oct. 1, 1880), one of the passengers was pointed out to me as Ruskin. He was rather thin and small, about five feet seven inches in height, with an undue proportion of legs, and wore a swallow-tail coat and a bright blue necktie. His age might be about sixty-five; his appearance was slightly eccentric.

Mr. Ruskin does not seem, after the lapse of years, to have much diminished his estimate of himself, and in the preface to the edition of 1880 of "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" he says: —

"The quite First Edition, with the original plates, will always, I venture to say, bear a high price in the market; for its etchings were not only, every line of them, by my hand, but bitten also with savage carelessness (I being then, as now, utterly scornful of all sorts of art dependent on blotch, or burr, or any other 'process' than that of steady hand and true line); out of which disdain, nevertheless, some of the plates came into effects both right and good for their purpose, and will, as I say, be always hereafter valuable."

JOHN WALKER VILANT MACBETH.

The mule undoubtedly, if it thinks at all, thinks itself superior to the horse or the ass, and reckons that it possesses the merits of both races without their drawbacks. It has both long life and long ears. Here is a specimen in Prof. John Walker Vilant Macbeth, who published his "Might and Mirth of Literature" in 1875. On page 51 he says: "Admire with intense enjoyment the ivory finish, the fairy-like, delicate polish and vocalization of the lines we refer to. Your gathering of a hundred of them will of itself entitle you to be named as a person of exquisite

taste; while you will have in your possession a pellucid fountain of enjoyment the most refined." He then gives no more than a line each of Byron, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Milton, and Chaucer, and eight lines of his own. Here is one he stole from James Beattie and misquoted: —

"He thought as a sage, but he felt as a man."

And that is all we shall want, I think, from this "pellucid fountain."

B. 1771. **SYDNEY SMITH.** D. 1845.

When advised to have his portrait painted by Landseer, who was eminent as a painter of men, and more so as a painter of dogs, Smith asked, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"

DR. SAMUEL PARR.

"The first Greek scholar," said Dr. Parr, "is Porson; the third is Dr. Burney; I leave you to guess who is the second."

B. 1771. **SIR WALTER SCOTT.** D. 1832.

Few men with a reputation so wide and enduring as that of Sir Walter Scott have been more modest and clear of all manifestations of vanity, — excluding,

of course, his fond idea of establishing a great family seat at Abbotsford; and it may be admitted, also, that ultimately he became as fond of being lionized as even Macaulay. He was in no hurry to avow himself as the "Great Unknown" author of the Waverley Novels, the Wizard of the North; and when he modestly began his Autobiography, cheerfully took a lower seat than the world willingly accords to him, saying, "Not being endowed with the talents of Burns or Chatterton, I have been delivered also from their temptations." In other words, he did not get drunk, nor was he an inspired impostor.

Walter Scott once wrote to his publisher, James Ballantyne, who had been offering some unwelcome hints, as follows: "I value your criticisms as much as ever, but the worst is, my faults are better known to myself than to you. Tell a young beauty that she wears an unbecoming dress, or speaks too loud, or any other fault she can correct, and she will do so if she has sense and a good opinion of your taste; but tell a failing beauty that her hair is getting gray, her wrinkles apparent, her gait heavy, and that she has no business in a ball-room but to be ranged against the wall as an evergreen, and you will afflict the poor old lady without rendering her any service. She knows all that better than you. I am sure the old lady in question takes pains enough with her toilet."

CONCLUSION.

THOUGH obtrusive vanity or self-glorification is ever very much disliked, especially by those afflicted with the same infirmity, it is very closely allied to the virtues, for the reason that men know praise or fame, which vain men so devoutly seek, will be more speedily and abundantly acquired through noble and virtuous actions than in any other way. A vain or proud man is often kept on a high plane, above doing a mean thing, — above being false to his wife, or scrimping the school-days of his children, or neglecting the unfortunate in the hour of distress, — because it elevates and preserves his reputation among those whose opinion he most values. The spur to acquire some future reputation, to be earned by conscious fidelity, keeps the work of men always at its best, — the mechanic at the top of his skill, the merchant ever mindful of the upright and downright in trade; the pulpit and the bar it pushes on to effort and to eloquence; it makes the soldier brave in battle, the politician ashamed not to be a patriot, and the statesman unwilling to give up "to party what was meant for mankind."

It is sometimes supposed that the *fair sex* have more vanity than men. If that were true, — which I should not dare to maintain, — when it is understood to be so often founded on beauty, who would deny that it rests on an ample basis? Why, take the

handsomest gentleman of the town, decorate him as a lady as much as you please, and how ugly he would appear, comparatively, with the very plainest of the other sex!

But there is no dearth of eminent female artists or authors; in fact they may be said almost to have created within the past century a "milky way" among the fixed stars of art and polite literature; and I do not find them more pronounced — rather less — in good opinions of themselves than men. They do not like to be called old or ugly; and who can blame them?

Even men never get so old but that they can be cheated by the flattery of friends who tell them, without a blush for the falsehood, that they do not appear any older than they did long years ago!

But, notwithstanding many really great men have often paraded a self-consciousness of their merits, and seem to have demanded, while living, from their fellow-men a full measure of approbation, it must, like spots on the sun, be regarded as a defect. There is infinite wisdom in the proverb, —

> "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth;
> A stranger, and not thine own lips."

The whole doctrine of Christianity, as well as of good breeding, teaches humility: "for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great." And though it may be a noble incentive to virtue to hope for human applause after "life's fitful fever" is over,

yet so long as you remain on earth, if you really believe there is a bigger fool in the world than yourself, you better not go and tell him of it. If you do, you will find he thinks just the same of you, and it may turn out a *tie vote*, or as in the case of a lawyer who told another that he was "no gentleman," and got in reply, "You are no judge."

Vainglorying is often as conspicuous in the domesticated animal kingdom as among the most self-satisfied of the human race. They like the approbation of their masters. The horse, when the rein is given, likes to leap by any other slower-going roadster, and becomes irritable and impatient at any rival's attempt to outstrip him on the highway. The horse, like the rural beau, never forgets to show the best pace as he comes into town. The pointer dog expects to be petted when it brings the game to the huntsman. It may be doubtful whether beasts of the field and fowls of the barnyard do not outrank in conceit the lords of creation; and it would seem that the latter should assume the virtue of modesty, though they have it not, where the peacock is their equal and the turkey-gobbler their superior.

One thing is certain: society with more alacrity loves those whose motives imply a generous consideration of others as well as of themselves, and who are not visibly self-centred.

If it appears that there is frequent folly in the exhibitions of this great human passion for the approbation of posterity, and if it be true, as we all believe,

that we are only waiting, like travellers at some rail-road station, for the next train which is to carry us to a higher sphere, with an immortality freed from human doubt, how much more important is it that we should anxiously labor for the approbation of the Giver of Eternal Life!

At the end of most Roman tragedies or comedies we find that the authors invoked public favor by adding the word

PLAUDITE.

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